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THE RVLE OF THE HOLY VIRGIN S. CLARE.

Togeather with the Admirable Life, of S. Catharine of Bologna, of the same Order.

Both translated into English.

Permissu Superiorũ M.DC.XXI.

B17395872

THE APOSTOLICALL CONFIRMATION OF THE RVLE

Which our Holy Father Saint Francis *gaue vnto our Holy Mother* S. Clare.

INNOCENT Bishop, Seruãt of the Seruantes of God, vnto our beloued daughters in Iesus Christ, Clare Abbesse, & vnto the other Sisters of the Monastery of

S Damian at Assise, health & Apostolicall Benediction

The Apostolicall Sea is accustomed to condescend vnto all pious requests, and graciously to fauour the good and holy desires of those who do propose them. And therefore, because that you haue humbly required of vs to approue & strengthen with our Apostolical confirmation, the Rule, according to which you are to liue in common, in one spirit, and in the profession of most high pouerty, the same Rule hauing byn giuen you by the holy Father S Francis, and of you receiued with much contentment and ioy; which Rule also our Venerable brother the Bishop of Ostia hath approued, as is more amply contayned, & declared

red in the letters of the said Bishop conformable vnto the commaundement which we gaue him, to confirme it with our Apostolicall authority, committed vnto him in this part. We therfore now condescending vnto your deuout petition do agayne confirme by these present letters, the sayd Rule, with our Apostolicall authority, inserting the tenour of the sayd letters word by word in these present letters as followeth.

Vgoline by the grace of God Bishop of Ostia & of Veletre, vnto his most deere Mother, and daughter in Iesus Christ, Clare Abbesse of S. Damians at Assise, and vnto her Sisters as well present as to succeed, health and fatherly Benediction. For so much as you my

deerly beloued daughters in Ieſus Chriſt contemning the pompes & delightes of the world, and following the footſteps of Ieſus Chriſt, and of his moſt holy Mother, haue choſẽ to remaine incloſed, to ſerue God: we praiſing your holy reſolutiõ, with a good will & Fatherly affection, curteouſly graunt you your demaunds and holy deſires. And we cõfirme by the Popes authority & ours, for you & al thoſe who ſhal ſucceed you in your Monaſtery, the Forme & Rule of life, of holy vnion, & of moſt high and ſublime pouerty which the glorious Father S. Francis hath giuen you, to obſerue as well by word as by writing; the which Rule is heere vnderneath ſpecified, as followeth.

In

IN THE NAME OF OVR LORD, AMEN.

Heere beginneth the Rule and Forme of life of the Order of the poore Sisters, giuen by S. Francis.

CHAP. I.

THE Rule, and forme of life, of the Order of the poore Sisters which the glorious Fa. S. Francis hath instituted, is this. To obserue the holy Ghospell of our Lord Iesus Christ, liuing in Obedience, without Propriety, and in Chastity.

2. Clare vnworthy handmaid of Iesus Christ, and little plant of our most holy Fa. S. Francis, vo-

weth Obedience, and Reuerence vnto Pope Innocent, and vnto his Succeſſors, who lawfully and canonically choſen, ſhall enter into the Church of Rome.

3. And as in the beginning of her Conuerſion, ſhe with her Siſters, vowed Obedience vnto the moſt holy Father S. Francis: ſo in like ſort doth ſhe vow to obſerue the ſame Obedience inuiolably vnto all his ſucceſſours. And the other Siſters are alwayes bound to obey the ſucceſſours of the Holy Father S. Francis: & to obey alſo Siſter Clare, and all other Abbeſſes who being lawfully & canonically choſen, ſhall ſucceed her.

of

Of those who desire to enter into this Religion: & how they shall be receiued.

CHAP. II.

WHEN any one presenteth her selfe vnto you through inspiratiō to take vpon her this life; the Abbesse shall be bound to aske the consent of all the Sisters: and if the greatest part giue their cōsent (hauing licence of the Cardinall your (a) protector) the Abbesse may receiue her.

(a) That vvhich heere is said that none are receyued vvithout licence of the Protectour, this povver hath bin by diuers Popes committed vnto the Generall & Prouincial, as it is set dovvne in

2. When she is to be receyued to be receyued into the Order

in the Constitutions. And before any be receiued, they must examine her, and make her be examined by the Bishop, or by his Vicar, as is ordayned by the Councell of Trent, the 15. Sess. c. 17.

receyued, the Abbesse shall examin her diligently; or cause her to be examined concerning the Catholike Fayth, & the holy Sacraments of the Church: all which if she do believe, and faythfully will confesse, and stedfastly observe vnto the end, then (if she haue no husband, or if be with leaue of the Bishop of his diocesse be entred into some Religion, and hath made vow of chastity; besides, if she be not too far in yeares, nor haue any sicknes or weaknes of head, that may hinder the obseruance of this life) there shall be declared vnto her

her the contents of your manner of life.

3. And if she be fit & willing, the wordes of the holy Gospell shall be sayd vnto her, to wit, that (b) she go and sell all that she hath, and giue it vnto the poore: which if she cannot effect, her good will shal suffice.

(b) That vvhich heer is said that the nouyce giue avvay al that she hath to the poor before she enter into the monastery, is to be ot serued at the profession, as appointeth the Cōcell of Trent sess. 25. c. 16.

4. The Abbesse and all the Sisters shall be very careful not to busy their minds by medling with her temporall goods, to the end that she may freely dispose of thē according as God shall inspire her.

5. Neuertheles if she doe heer-

in

in aske their counsayle, they shall send her to some discreet person that feareth God, through whose counsayle her goods may be distributed vnto the poore.

6. Then her haire shall be cut of round, & her secular habit shall be taken away, & the Abbesse shal lend her three coates & one cloke, after which time it is not lawfull for her to go out of the Monastery without profitable, manifest, & probable cause.

7. Whē the yeare of her (c) probation is expired, the shall

(c) VVhat is heere said, that, the yeare of probation being ended, she be admitted, is vnderstood vvhen there is no impediment; and the Councell of Trent sayth, that the tyme of the Nouitiate being finished, if she be iudged fit, that she be receiued: othervvise that she be set out of

of the Monaſtery. Alſo that the reſt, vvhich the ſaid Councell ordaineth in the 25. Seſſ. c. 17. be obſerued, acquainting the Bishop, or his Vicar Generall therevvith.

ſhall be receiued to Obedience, vowing perpetually to obſerue the life, & forme of your pouerty.

8. None ſhall receiue the veyle during the yeare of probation.

9. The Sifters may alſo haue litle clokes for the modeſty & cõmodity of their ſeruice & labour.

10. The Abbeſſe ſhall diſcreetly prouide, that her Siſters haue cloathes according vnto the quality of perſons, times, and places, and of the cold regions, as ſhe ſhall ſee their neceſſity doth require.

11. The yong who are receiued

ued into the monastery before sufficient age, shall haue their hayre cut of, and their secular habit taken away, and be cloathed with such cloth as the Religious, according to the discretiō of the Abbesse; and when they are come vnto fit yeares, they shall take the habit as the others doe, & make their probation.

12. And as well for them as for the other Nouices, the Abbesse shall carefully prouide a mistresse, one of the discreetest of the Monastery, who shall diligently instruct them in modest manners & holy conuersation, according vnto the forme of your profession.

13. The same manner shall be obserued in the admittance of the Sisters who serue without the monastery,

naſtery, & thoſe Siſters may weare ſhooes.

14. None may dwell within the Monaſtery, except they be receiued according vnto the forme of your profeſſion.

15. I do admoniſh, pray & requeſt my Siſters, for the loue of the moſt holy and ſweet child Ieſus, who was wrapped in poore cloutes, and laid in a cribbe, & for the loue of his holy Mother, that they will alwaies be cloathed with poore cloathes.

Of the diuine Office, Of fasting, Of confessing, & communicating.

CHAP. III.

THE Sisters that can read, shall say the diuine office, according to the custome of the Friars Minors, wherefore they may haue Breuiaryes.

2. They shall read their office without song: and those who sometimes for som reasonable impediment cānot reade their office, may say Pater nosters in lieu thereof.

3. The other Sisters who cannot read, shall say foure and twenty Pater Nosters, for the Mattins; for the Laudes, fiue; for Prime,

Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None, for each of these houres seauen; for Euensong, twelue: for Compline seauen.

4. For the Euensong of the dead, also seauen Pater Nosters, with *Requiem eternam*; for the Matins twelue. The Sisters who can read, are bound to read the office of the dead as it is ordained in the Breuiary.

5. When any Sister of your monastery is departed this life, the Sisters shall say fifty Pater notters for her soule.

6. The Sisters shall alwaies fast, but on the Natiuity of our Lord, when they may make two refections, vpon what day soeuer that it falleth. With the yong, weake & those who serue without the mo-

nastery, the Abbesse shall charitably dispence, when she thinketh good: but in time of manifest necessity the Sisters are not bound to corporall fasting.

7. They shall confesse with licence of the Abbesse, at the least twelue tymes in the yeare, & then they shall take heed that they doe not mingle any words which appertaine not vnto confession, or to the good of their soules.

8. They shall receiue the B. Sacrament seauen tymes in the yeare; as on the Natiuity of our Lord, on Maunday thursday, on Easterday, on Whitsonday, on the Assumption of our B. Lady, on S Francis day, & on All-Saints day.

9. It is lawfull for the Chaplaine

laine to celebrate within the monastery, for to giue the Communion vnto the sicke.

Of the Election of the Abbesse.

CHAP. IIII.

IN the election of the Abbesse the Sisters are bound to obserue the Canonicall manner.

2. And they shall speedily procure to haue the Generall Minister, or at least the Prouinciall of the Friars Minors, who with the word of God shal exhort them to concord and vnion, and to seeke the cõmon good in the election.

3. None shall be chosen, who is not professed: or if such a one were chosen, or otherwise giuen

for Abbesse, they shall not obay her, except she first vow to obserue the forme of their pouerty.

4. And when the Abbesse dyeth the election of another shall be made in the same manner.

5. If at any time it shall seeme vnto the company, that the Abbesse elected were not sufficient for the seruice of the Sisters & the common good, the same Sisters are bound to choose another, so speedily as they can, according to the foresayd forme.

6. She who is chosen, shall consider and weigh what a charge she hath taken vpon her, & who he is to whom she must render account of the flocke committed vnto her.

7. She

7. She ſhall rather ſtriue to be ſuperiour in vertues, and to be before others in holy manners, then in her office, that ſo the Siſters, moued with her example, obey her more for loue, then for feare.

8. She ſhall take heed of particuler affection, leaſt particularity breed ſcandall to the community.

9. She ſhall comfort the deſolate, and be the laſt refuge of the afflicted, leaſt peraduenture the weake wanting comfort, come to be ouercome with the ſadnes of deſpaire.

10. She ſhall follow the community in all thinges, principally in the Church, Dortour, Refectory, and in the Infirmary, as alſo in her attire; and the Vicareſſe

is likewise bound to obserue the same manner.

11. The Abbesse shall assẽble the Sisters to Chapter at least once a week: where she with the other Sisters shall humbly confesse and acknowledge all their publike offences, and negligences.

12. There also she shall conferre with all her Sisters of those things that are to be handled for the good and decency of the monastery: for it happeneth many times that God reuealeth what is best to be done, vnto the least.

13. No great debt shall be made without the consent of all the Sisters, in time of manifest necessity, and that shall be done by meanes of their procuratour.

14. The Abbesse and other Sisters

Sisters shall take heed that they doe not receiue to keep any thing for others within the Conuent, for oftentimes by such occasion doth arise turbation and scandall.

15. All the officers of the monastery shall be chosen by the cõmon consent of all the Sisters, for the better conseruing of mutuall peace and vnion.

16. In like mãer shall be chosẽ at least eight Sisters of the discreetest, whose counsaile the Abbesse is bound to vse in matters concerning their manner of life.

17. The Sisters may & ought, when they shall thinke it expedient and profitable, sometymes chaunge the officers, & discreet, & choose others in their place.

Of silence, and of the manner of speaking at the Speak-house, & grate.

CHAP. V.

FROM Complin vntill Tierce, the Sisters shall keep silence, except those who serue without the monastery.

2. They shall alwayes keep silence in the Church, Dortour, & in the Refectory only whiles they eate. In the Infirmary it is alwayes lawfull for the Sisters to speake discreetly, for the recreation and seruice of the sicke.

3. The Sisters may neuertheles at all times, & in all places briefly with a soft voice say such things as are needfull.

4. It is not lawfull for the Sisters

ſters to ſpeak at the Speak-houſe, or at the Grate without licence of the Abbeſſe, or of the Vicareſſe: and thoſe that haue leaue to ſpeake at the Speake-houſe, muſt not ſpeake, but in the preſence of two Siſters, who muſt heare the things ſpoken there.

5. None may preſume to come to the Grate except there be preſent at the leaſt three, thereunto appointed by the Abbeſſe or Vicareſſe, of the eight diſcreet who are choſen by all the Siſters for the counſayle of the Abbeſſe.

6. And the Abbeſſe and Vicareſſe are bound to obſerue this manner of ſpeaking, which ſhall be very ſeldome at the Grate, but at the gate it ſhall neuer be permitted.

7. And at the Grate there shall be put a cloth within, which shall not be opened except whiles a Sermon is made, or whiles they do speake one vnto another.

8. There shall be before the Grate a doore of wood wel furnished, with two locks and bolts of iro, which in the night, principally, shall be locked with two keyes, one of which the Abbesse shall haue, & the Sacristane the other.

9. The doore shall be alwaies shut, except whiles the diuine office is read, or for the causes aboue mentioned.

10. Now may speak at the Grate before the rising, or after the setting of the sun, in what sort soeuer.

11. At the Speak-house there shall alwayes be a cloth within, which

which shall neuer be taken of.

12. No Sisters may speake at the Speake-house within S. Martins Lent, nor within the great Lent, but only vnto the Priest for cause of Confession, or for some other manifest necessity, the which shall be committed vnto the discretion of the Abbesse, or of her Vicaresse.

How the Sisters may not receiue any possession by themselues, or by any person interposed.

CHAP. VI.

AFTER that the Heauenly Father had vouchsafed through his diuine grace to illuminate my hart, in such sort, that by the example

ample & doctrine of our holy Father S. Francis, I beganne to doe pennance: a little after his conuersion, I with my Sisters did willingly vow Obedience vnto him.

2. The holy Father perceauing that we feared no pouerty, labour, tribulation, vility, or contempt of this world, but that we esteemed these as great riches, he being moued with pitty did write vnto vs a forme of life, making this promise.

3. Considering that through the inspiration of God, you haue made your selues daughters and handmaydes of the most high & soueraygne King, and heauenly Father, and haue permitted your selues to be guided by the holy Ghost, choosing to liue according

vnto

vnto the perfection of the holy Ghospell, I will, and promise by my self & by my Brothers, to haue alwaies ouer you a diligent and especiall care, as ouer them.

4. The which he diligently fulfilled whiles he liued on earth: and willed that it should alwayes be fulfilled by his Brothers.

5. And vnto the end that we should in no time decline from the most holy pouerty, which we had imbraced, nor those also who should succeed after vs; a little before his death, he wrote againe vnto vs his last will, saying in these words

6. I Brother Francis, the least of all, will follow the life and pouerty of our most soueraigne Lord Iesus Christ, and of his most holy Mother; and will perseuere in the same

same vnto the end; and I beseech you all my daughters and Sisters in our Lord Iesus Christ, and counsell you, that you will alwayes liue in this most holy life, and pouerty: and take great care that you do neuer depart from the same through the teaching or counsaile of any one.

7. And as I haue alwaies byn carefull with my Sisters to obserue the holy Pouerty which we haue promised vnto God, and vnto the holy Father S. Francis; in like manner all the Abbesses that shall succeed me in the office, and the Sisters that are to come, are bound to obserue it inuiolably vnto the end, that is: Not to haue or receiue possessions or propriety, eyther by themselues or by other

ther meanes interposed, nor any thing that may rightly be called propriety, besides only a little ground which necessity doth require, for the decency and separation of the monastery, & this ground shal not be tilled otherwise then as a garden for the vse of the Sisters.

The manner that the Sisters shall obserue in their manuall works.

CHAP. VII.

THE Sisters on whō God hath bestowed the gift of working, shall imploy themselues faithfully and deuoutly after Tierce, in all such workes as appertayne vnto the decency of the Monastery, and common good; in such sort that

that on the one ſide idlenes be expelled, which is an enemy of the ſoule; and on the other, they doe not quench the ſpirit of deuotion and of holy prayer, vnto which all temporall thinges ought to ſerue.

2. And the Siſters ſhal be bound to declare in Chapter, vnto their Abbeſſe or vnto her Vicareſſe, before the company, that which they haue wrought with their handes.

3. The ſame ſhall be done if any ſend almes for the neceſſity of the Siſters, vnto the end, that in common they may recommend them vnto God: and the almes ſhall be diſtributed for the goood of the community by the Abbeſſe or her Vicareſſe, with the coũſayle of the diſcreete.

How

How the Sisters shall not appropriate any thing vnto themselues: & of the sicke Sisters.

CHAP. VIII.

THE Sisters shall appropriat nothing vnto themselues, neyther House, nor Place, nor any thing, but they shall be pilgrimes and straangers in this world, seruing our Lord in Pouerty & Humility.

2. They shall send for almes with great confidence, neyther ought they to be ashamed therof, seeing our Sauiour was poore for the loue of vs in this world.

3. This is the height of the most high Pouerty, the which

hath made you (my moſt deerly beloued Siſters) heires & Queens of the Kingdome of heauen: hath made you poore for temporall cõmodityes, to the end you may be ennobled with celeſtiall vertues. Let this be your portion which doth lead into the land of the liuing: vnto which (deerly beloued Siſters) wholy adhering, doe you neuer at any tyme poſſeſſe any thing vnder heauen, for the name of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt.

4. It is not lawfull for any Siſter to ſend letters, or to receiue any, or to giue any thing out of the monaſtery, without the conſent of the Mother Abbeſſe, nor to haue any thing which the Abbeſſe hath not permitted, or giuen her.

5. If vnto any Siſter be ſent any thing from her parents, or from

from any other, the Abbesse may giue it her, and she may vse it, if she haue need of it: if not the Abbesse may giue it in charity to any other Sister who hath need of it. If vnto any one be sent money, the Abbesse with counsayle of the discreet shall prouide her of things necessary.

6. The Abbesse is strictly bound carefully to search out by her selfe, or by others, the necessityes of the sick Sisters, as wel for counsaile about their remedy, as for meate & other things necessary.

7. She shall charitably and mercifully prouide for them, according to the possibility of the place: so all the Sisters being boud to prouide and to serue their sicke

Sister, euen as they would be serued if they themselues were sicke.

8. They shall freely declare the one vnto the other their necessity; for if a true mother do loue and nourish her carnall daughter, with how greater diligence and care ought a Sister to loue & nourish her spirituall Sister?

9. The sicke may lye vpon beddes of chaffe, and haue vnder their heads a pillow of feathers. Those who haue need may vse sockes & quiltes.

10. The aforesaid sicke when they are visited of those who * enter into the Monastery, may answer briefly vnto those who speake vnto them, with good

* This is not now necessary seing none enter but in the cases permitted by the coūcell of Trent in the Sess. 25. c. 8.

good and edificatory words: the other Sisters who haue leaue to be present, may not speake vnto those that enter the monastery, except in the presence of two of the discreet Sisters, appointed by the Abbesse or Vicaresse, who must heare the things spoken. And the Abbesse & her Vicaresse are boūd themselues to obserue this manner of speaking.

Of Pennance to be enioyned the Sisters that offend: and of the manner of dealing abroad the Monastery.

CHAP. IX.

IF that any Sister, by the instigation of the enemy, sinne mor-

tally agaynſt the forme of her profeſſion, & being admoniſhed therof two or three tymes by the Abbeſſe or others Siſters, doe not amend: as many dayes as ſhe hath continued obſtinate and contumacious, ſo many daies ſhall ſhe eat bread & water on the ground before all the Siſters in the Refectory; and endure greater penance if the Abbeſſe thinke good. In the meane time that ſhe is thus obſtinate and contumacious, they ſhall pray, that it will pleaſe God to lighten her hart vnto penance.

2. The Abbeſſe and Siſters ſhall be carefull that they be not angry or troubled at the offeces of their Siſters: for anger & perturbation doth hinder charity in theſelues and others.

3. If

3. If it happen(which God forbid) that there ariſe betweene the Siſters, in word or ſigne, any contention or ſcandall, she who gaue the occaſion ſhall preſently before that she offer vnto God the ſacrifice of Prayer, proſtrate her ſelfe before the others feet, not only humbly asking pardon, but alſo intreating her deuoutly, that she will pray vnto our Sauiour for her, that it may pleaſe him to forgiue her.

4. The other being mindfull of the words of our Sauiour, who ſayth: *If you doe not forgiue with your whole hart, your heauenly Father ſhall not forgiue you*, ſhall freely forgiue her Siſter all the iniury which she may haue done her.

5. The Siſters who ſerue with-

out the Monaſtery, ſhall ſtay no longer out then manifeſt neceſſity doth require.

6. They ſhall goe modeſtly, and ſpeake little, to the end that thoſe who ſee them may be edified by them. They ſhall take heed that they keep no ſuſpected company or fellowſhip with any one; & that they be not God-Mothers vnto any mans child, ſonne or daughter, leaſt therby ſhould ariſe any occaſiō of ſcandall or perturbation.

7. They ſhall not preſume to relate in the monaſtery any newes heard in the world, nor tell in the world any thing that is done or ſaid in the Monaſtery, through which may ariſe any ſcandall: Wherin if any one offēd through igno-

ignorance, the Abbesse shall charitably enioyne her penance; but if through euil custome, the Abbesse shal enioyne her pennance according to the offence, by counsaile of the discreet.

Of the Admonishment, and Visitation of the Sisters.

CHAP. X.

THE Abbesse shall visit and admonish her Sisters humbly, & shall correct them charitably, not commaunding any thing contrary vnto their soules good, nor agaynst the forme of their profession.

2. The Sisters shall be mindfull that for the loue of God they

haue renounced their owne will: and are firmely bound to obey their Abbesse in al things that they haue vowed to obserue, & which are not contrary to their profession.

3. The Abbesse shall be with them so familiar, that they may speake and deale with her, as mistresse with the maid: for the Abbesse ought to be seruant vnto all the Sisters.

4. I admonish and exhort my Sisters in Christ Iesus our Lord, that they take heed of pride, vainglory, enuy, and couetousnes: that they fly care and solicitude of the world, detraction, murmuration, & dissention.

5. They shall alwaies be sollicitous to conserue the vnion of Charity

Charity which is the band of perfection. Thoſe that cannot read, ſhall not take care to learne, but conſider that aboue al things they ought to deſire the ſpirit of our Lord, & the holy operation therof; and alwayes to pray to our Lord with a pure hart, to haue humility and patience in ſicknes and tribulation, to loue thoſe who perſecute, reprehend, and chaſtize them; for our Lord ſayth: Bleſſed are they who ſuffer perſecution for iuſtice, for theirs is the Kingdome of heauen: and thoſe that perſeuere vntill the end, ſhall be ſaued.

Of

Of the duety of the Portresse.

CHAP. XI.

THE Portresse shal be of conuenient age, discreet & of mature manners. She shall keep her residence in the day time in an open Cell without a doore, & haue a fit companion, who as need requireth in all thinges may supply her Office.

2. The doore shall haue two sides opening in the middest, furnished with two strong lockes & diuers iron barres and boltes. In the night principally it shall be locked with two keyes, of which the Portresse shall haue one, and the Abbesse the other. In the day it

it shall not be left loose, but alwaies be locked with one key, and they shall take diligent care that it neuer stand opē, so neere as may be. They shall by no meanes open the gate vnto those who would enter, except they haue licence frō the Popes Holines, or from the Lord Cardinall Protectour.

3. The Sisters shall let none enter into the Monastery, before the rising, or after the setting of the sunne; neither shall they permit any to enter within the Monastery, except for manifest, reasonable, and ineuitable cause.

4. If any Bishop haue leaue to say Masse within, eyther for the benediction of the Abbesse, or to consecrate any Religious, or for any other very important affayre,

fayre, he shall at that time be content with a few followers, & those who are decent.

5. And when it is needfull that any doe enter into the Cloister for to doe anv worke, the Abbesse shall carefully appoint one at the gate who shall let only those enter who are appointed to doe the worke: and the Sisters shall take heed that they be not seene of those who enter into the Monastery.

Of the Visitour, & Chaplaine.

CHAP. XII.

YOVR Visitour shall be alwaies of the Order of the Friars Minors, according vnto the will and com-

commaundement of your Cardinall: and ſhall be ſuch a one as is well knowne to be modeſt of manners, whoſe office is to reforme, as well in the head, as in the members, the exceſſes committed againſt the forme of your profeſſion.

2. He ſhall be in an open place, to the end that he may be ſeene of the others.

3. He may ſpeake vnto many, and vnto ech in particuler, of thoſe things which appertayne to the office of Viſitation, and of thoſe thinges which ſhall ſeeme vnto him expedient.

4. We require the fauour of the ſame order through the charity of our Lord, & of our holy Father S. Francis; to haue a Chaplaine

plaine with a companion who is a Prieſt, of good name, and diſcreet: as alſo two lay Brothers of holy conuerſation, and louers of modeſty, to aſſiſt vs in our Pouerty, as we haue hitherto had of the Friars Minors.

5. The Chaplaine may not enter into the Conuent without his companion, and entring they ſhallbe in an open place, that they may be ſeene of ech other, as alſo of the Siſters.

6. They may enter to confeſſe the ſicke that cannot goe vnto the Grate, to giue them the B. Sacrament, and extreme Vnction, to reade the recommendations of the ſoule when they are in danger of death, to celebrate the maſſe & the offices of the dead; and to digge

digge & open the graue, may enter other modeſt perſos, according to the diſcretion of the Abbeſſe. Furthermore the Sifters are bound to haue for their Protector, Gouernour, and Reformer, one of the Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, the ſame that ſhall be ordayned by our holy Father the Pope, vnto the Friars Minors: that being alwayes ſubiect vnder the feete of the ſame holy Roman Church, ſtedfaſt in the Catholike fayth, we may obſerue the holy pouerty & humility of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, and of his holy Mother, & the holy Ghoſpell which we haue vowed. Amen.

Heere endeth the Rule of the poore Siſters, dated at Peruſia the ſixt of September, the tenth yeare of the

Popedome of our holy Father Pope Innocent *the fourth.*

Heere foloweth the reſt of the Bull for the Confirmation of the Rule.

THEREFORE let not any perſon violate, or diſanuall this our Letter, & Bull of Confirmation, or by toolish boldnes contradict it; the which if any one preſume to doe, let him know that he doth incurre the indignation of Almighty God, and of his holy Apoſtles S. Peter and S. Paul. Dated at Aſſiſe, the ninth day of Auguſt, the eleuenth yeare of our Popedome.

Laus Deo, Beatæ Mariæ ſemper Virgini, Beato Franciſco, atque Beatæ Claræ. Amen.

Heere

Heere beginneth the Testament of our holy Mother S. Clare.

IN NOMINE DOMINI, AMEN.

AMONGEST all other benefittes, which we haue receyued of our bountifull benefactour the King of mercies, and daily receiue of him, for which we are most bound to prayse him, is our Vocation: the which by how much it is more perfect & great, by so much are we more obliged vnto him. The Apostle saith: *Acknowledge your vocation*: God hath himselfe made a way, the which he shewed by word and example, & our holy Father S. Francis a most perfect louer and follower of the same

way, hath taught it vs. Wherfore my beloued Sisters, we ought to marke the ineſtimable benefitt which God hath beſtowed on vs among others, and hath vouchſafed to worke in vs through his ſeruant, our Holy Fa. S. Francis, not only ſince our conuerſion, but alſo before, when yet we were in captiuity and vanity of the world. For after his conuerſion (not hauing as yet any Brothers) being to repayre to S. Damians Church, where he was viſited with diuine conſolations, and conſtrayned wholy to abandon the world, filled with ioy and illumination of the holy Ghoſt, he propheſyed of vs, that which our Lord hath afterward fulfilled.

For ſtanding on the walls of the

the ſayd Church, he called with a loud voice in the French tongue on ſome poore folks, who therby did dwell, ſaying: come help me in this Church of S. Damian, for there ſhal come women by whoſe good life and holy conuerſation, our heauenly Father ſhall be honoured in his whole Church. Wherin we may marke the great bounty of God towards vs, who out of his aboundant mercy and charity did vouchſafe to propheſy theſe things by his ſeruant, of our vocation and election: and not only of vs did our holy Father foretell theſe thinges, but alſo of thoſe who herafter ſhall be partakers of the vocatiõ which our Lord hath called vs vnto. With what care of ſoule & body are we then bound

to keep the commaundements of God, and of our holy Father S. Francis, to the end that with the grace of God, we may repay him his tallent multiplyed and increased? Neyther hath our Lord only placed vs as an example and patterne for the seculär, but particulerly for all our Sisters who he shall call vnto our course of life, that they also may be a mirrour and example vnto those who are in the world.

Seeing then our Lord God hath honoured vs with so bigh a vocation as to serue for a patterne vnto those, who ought to be an example vnto others, how much are we bound to blesse and prayse our Lord God, & in well doing to remayne the more comforted in him.

him. Wherfore if we liue piously according to the forme aboue mẽtioned, we shall leaue good exãple vnto those who shall follow vs, & after short labours receiue the reward of euerlasting life. When our heauenly Father had vouchsafed through his great mercy and grace, to illuminate my hart, in such sort that through the exãple and teaching of our holy Father S. Francis I began to doe penance: a little after his conuersion, I with a few Sisters whome our Lord ioyned vnto me, a little after my conuersion, willingly promised vnto him obedience, as our Lord, through the light of his grace, inspired vs, by meanes of his meruailous life, and holy doctrine,

S. Francis then marking that though we were according to the body weak & tender, yet were we not dismayed with any necessity, pouerty, labour, tribulatiō, or cōtempt of the world, but that we esteemed all those things as great pleasures, as he had proued by the example of his Brothers, he reioyced in our Lord, and moued towards vs with great charity, he bound himselfe & his Brothers to haue alwaies ouer vs a speciall and diligent care. We went also by the will of God, and of our holy Father S. Francis, towardes the Church of S. Damian to dwell there; soone after which tyme our Lord through his great mercy and grace multiplyed vs in number, so that then was fulfilled that

which

which our Lord had ſayd by his Seruant: for we dwelt before in another place.

A little after he wrote vnto vs this forme of life, and principally that we ſhould perſeuere in this moſt holy pouerty. Neither was it ſufficient vnto him, that he admoniſhed vs thereunto in his life by many ſermons and exhortations to moue vs to the loue & obſeruance of the ſame holy pouerty: but alſo he gaue vs many writings, that after his death we might not fall from the ſame holy pouerty, according to the exãple of the Sonne of God, who liuing in this world did neuer leaue it: which alſo our holy Fa. S. Francis with his Brothers did honour and obſerue during his life. Where-

fore, I Clare, ſeruant and handmaid of Chriſt, and of the poore Siſters of S. Damian, although vnworthy, the little Plant of our holy Father S. Francis, conſidering this with my other Siſters, & togeather the highnes of our Profeſſion made vnto ſuch a Father, fearing our owne frailty, and of others after the death of our holy Father, who next vnto God was our pillar and comfort: againe & againe bind myſelfe vnto the holy Lady Pouerty; to the end that the Siſters which now are, or ſhall come after my death, may by no meanes decline from the ſame.

This Pouerty I haue alwaies byn carefull (with the grace of God) to obſerue, and to cauſe it to be obſerued, and for more ſecu-

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rity I haue made profeſſion ther-of, vnto our holy Father Pope Innocent the fourth, in whoſe time we began, and haue renewed it to his ſucceſſours: that by no meanes and in no time, we ſhould decline from this holy Pouerty, which we haue vowed vnto God, and vnto S. Francis.

Wherfore, I bowing the knee, both of my inward and outward man, in all humility commend vnto the Church of Rome, vnto our holy Father the Pope, & ſpecially vnto the Cardinall, vnto whoſe protection, togeather with the Friars Minors we are committed, that for the loue of God who was borne with great pouerty in the cribbe, liued poorely in this world, and dyed poorely on the Croſſe,

Crosse, they will preserue this litle flocke which God the Father hath gayned in his Church, by the words and examples of our holy Father S. Francis: causing them to follow the humility and pouerty of his deerly beloued Sonne, and of his holy Mother, and making the holy pouerty to be obserued, which we haue promised vnto God, & vnto S. Francis, & strengthening them to obserue it.

And as God gaue vnto vs our holy Father S. Francis for our founder and helper in the seruice of God, and in those things which we vowed vnto God, and vnto him to obserue, and as he was carefull whiles he liued to water vs his little Plants, by word and example: so I commend, & leaue my

my Sisters, as well those who are already, as those who hereafter shall be, vnto the Successour of S. Francis, & to the whole Religion: that they wil alwais help vs to proceed from better to better, to serue God, and accomplish and obserue the holy Pouerty. If it shall happen at any time that the sayd Sisters should leaue their coūtrey or Citty, to goe to an other, they are firmely bound after my death, in what place soeuer they are, to obserue the holy Pouerty which they haue vowed vnto God, and vnto S. Francis.

Those who shall be in office, as also the other Sisters shall be careful that they receiue no more ground, then extreme necessity doth require, as a garden for help

vnto their releefe; and if for the defece or decency of the Cloyster it were needful to haue more ground, they shal take but only what is necessary, in which they may not plough nor sow. I admonish you all my Sisters, who are, and shall be, that you labour to follow the way of simplicity, humility, & Pouerty: and also the modesty of holy conuersation, as we in the beginning of our conuersion, were taught of Christ, and of our holy Father S. Francis: so that not through our merits, but through the mercy of the liberall giuer, the Father of mercies may spread abroad the odour of our good name, as well amongst those who are far off, as amongst those who are neere.

And

And for the charity of our Lord Ieſus, keep vnion of loue. The charity which you haue inwardly, ſhew it outwardly by workes, to the end that through your example, the Siſters which are called vnto your profeſſion, may increaſe in the loue of God and mutuall charity. Alſo I pray all thoſe, who ſhall be choſen to beare offices among the Siſters, that they will ſtudy to excell the others, rather in vertue & modeſt conuerſation, then in authority & office, that ſo by their example, the Siſters which were called vnto Religion before them may be moued to obey them, not only in reſpect of their office, but for loue.

The Abbeſſe muſt be carefull

full & discreet towards her Sisters, as a good Mother is towardes her children. She must carefully prouide for euery one according to their necessity, of the almes which it shall please God to send her. She must also be so sweet and familiar to all, that the Sisters may without feare or doubt declare to her their necessities, and haue confidently recourse vnto her.

Whē the Abbesse & the Sisters shall thinke any thing necessary, let the Sisters which are subiect remember, that for the loue of God they haue renounced their owne wills: wherefore I will, that they obey their Mother, as they haue of their owne accord vowed vnto God to doe, to the end that their Mother seeing the humility, cha-

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rity, and vnion which they haue vnto ech other, may easily beare the charg which she hath through her office. Which because it is heauy and bitter, they must through their holy conuersation, seeke to turne it into sweetnes: & seeing the way is narrow and the gate strait, which leadeth vnto life, & few there are which walke in it, and few that therin persever, blessed are those which haue receiued the grace to walke in it, and to persevere therin vnto the end.

Wherfore let vs be carefull, seing we be entred in the way of our Lord, that by our fault & negligence we doe not fall from the same, commit, nor do iniury vnto our Lord, vnto his B. mother the Glorious Virgin Mary, vnto our

holy Fa. S. Francis, vnto the triumphant, & militãt Church: for it is written, Curſed are thoſe who decline frõ their cõmaundements.

To obtayne this grace I bow my knee vnto the Heauenly Father, through the merits of our Lord Ieſus, and of his B. Mother, of our holy Father S. Francis, and of all the Saints, that it will pleaſe his diuine Maieſty, who hath giuẽ a good beginning, to grant grace alſo, that it may augment, & without end perſeuer euen vntil death. Deerly beloued Siſters, preſent & to come, that you may the better perſeuere in your vocatiõ, I leaue vnto you this writing in token of our Lords benediction, and of the benediction of our holy Father S. Francis, and of me your Mother and

and Seruant.

Heere endeth the Testament of our holy Mother, the glorious Virgin Saint Clare.

Heere beginneth our holy Mother S. Clares Benediction vnto her Sisters, present and to come.

IN THE NAME OF THE *Father, and of the Sonne, and of the Holy Ghost.* *Amen.*

MY deerly beloued Sisters, our Lord giue you his holy Benediction, and behold you with the eye of his mercy, and giue you

his peace: as alſo vnto all thoſe, who ſhall enter and perſeuere in this our Colledge and Monaſterys and vnto all other of the Order who ſhall perſeuere vnto the end in this holy Pouerty. I Clare, ſeruant of Ieſus Chriſt, and little plant of our holy Father S. Francis, your Mother and Siſter, although vnworthy, doe beſeech our Lord Ieſus Chriſt that through the interceſſion of his moſt holy Mother, of the holy Archangell S. Michael, and of all the holy Angells, of our holy Father Saint Francis, and of the holy Saints, it will pleaſe him to giue and confirme in you this Benediction in heauen and in earth. In earth by multiplying in you, graces and vertues, in his militant Church amongſt

amongſt his ſeruants. In heauen in his triumphant Church, eleuating you amongſt his Saints. I giue you my Benediction in my life, and after my death, in all that I am able, and more then I am able, with all the Bleſſings wherwith the Father of mercies hath, or ſhall bleſſe his ſpirituall Children both in heauen and earth: or wherewith the Spirituall Mother doth, or ſhall be able to bleſſe her ſpirituall children, Amen. Be alwaies louers of God, of your ſoules, & of your Siſters: be alwais carefull to keep that which you haue vowed. And our Lord be alwaies with you, and you with him. Amen.

The Bull of Pope Innocent the Fourth, at the instance of our holy Mother S. Clare, to remit the Graunt made by Pope Gregory the ninth.

That the Religious may not be constrayned to receiue Rents, or Possessions.

INNOCENT Bishop, Seruant of the Seruants of God, vnto his deerly beloued daughtets & hãdmaids of Iesus Christ, Clare Abbesse, and vnto the other Sisters of the Monastery of S. Damian at Assize, as well present as to come, health and Apostolicall Benediction. Seeing it is manifest that you haue sold all your goods, to bestow

beſtow them on the poore, the better to renounce the thoughts & deſires of tẽporall things; deſiring to be dedicated wholy vnto God, and that you haue a firme reſolution, not to hold, in what ſort ſoeuer, any poſſeſſions, or immoueable goods, following in all thinges the footſteps of him who for vs was made poore, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Neither is the neceſſity and want of corporall things able to terrify you from this firme purpoſe, for ſo much as the left hand of the heauenly Spouſe is vnder your head, to ſuſtaine the great feeblenes of your body, the which you haue ſubiected vnto the law of the ſpirit, with great feruour of charity. That Lord who fee-

deth the birds of the aire, & cloatheth the hearbs of the feilds, will reward you with himselfe in eternity; when his right hand shall imbrace you gloriously, in his perfect vision. Moued herewith, as also becauſe you demaund of vs with great humility, that we would confirme vnto you, with our Apoſtolicall Graunt, the laid reſolution which you haue taken, to follow the moſt high Pouerty: we yield vnto you by the tenour of theſe preſent Letters, that you may not be conſtrained by any whoſoeuer he be, to take, haue, or retaine any temporall poſſeſſions. If any mayde would not, or could not keep this Rule, let her not remain with you, but be ſtraight way ſet vnto ſome other place. Alſo we

or-

ordaine & forbid, that no person, of what quality or conditiõ soeuer he may be, be so bold as to trouble your Monastery: & if any person Ecclesiastical or Secular, knowing this our Constitution & Confirmation, attempt in what sort soeuer, to doe contrary to the same, and after hauing bin three diuers times reprehended, & aduertised, doth not amend and make due satisfaction for his fault, he shall be depriued of his Office, Dignity and Honour. And that one may know such a person to be already condemned for his wickednes by the iudgement of God, he shall be cut of from the holy communion of faithfull Christians; and shall be guilty of the diuine vengeance at the last Iudgement. But

those who loue all in Iesus Christ, and your Order, specially the Monastery of S Damian, The peace of God be with them, to the end they may receiue the fruit of their good workes, and may find the recompence of eternall beatitude at the day of the rigorous and last iudgement. Iesus who is goodnes it selfe, giue his Benediction to all those, who with all their power shall keep the treasure of holy Pouerty. *Amen*.

LITANIÆ B. P. N. FRANCISCI.

KYRIE eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison, Christe audi nos.
Christe exaudi nos.
Pater de cælis Deus, Miserere nobis. Fili

Fili Redemptor mundi Deus, Mi.
Spiritus ſancte Deus, Miſerere no.
Sancta Trinitas vnus Deus, Miſ.
Sancte Franciſce, Pater amabilis,
ora pro nobis.
Pater admirabilis, ora.
Pater benigne, ora.
Pater venerabilis, ora.
Vexillifer Ieſu Chriſti, ora.
Eques Crucifixi, ora.
Imitator filij Dei, ora.
Seraphim ardens, ora pro nobis.
Fornax Charitatis, ora pro nobis.
Arca Sanctitatis, ora.
Cultor Pacis, ora.
Vas Puritatis, ora.
Norma Iuſtitiæ, ora.
Speculum Pudicitiæ, ora.
Regula Pœnitentiæ, ora.
Magiſter Obedientiæ, ora.
Exemplar Virtutum, ora.

Patri-

Patriarcha Pauperum, ora.
Profligator Criminum, ora.
Lumen tuæ Patriæ, ora.
Decus Morum, ora.
Viuificator Mortuorum. ora.
Saluator Famelicorum, ora.
Obsequium Leprosorum, ora.
Præco magni Regis, ora.
Forma Humilitatis, ora.
Consors Sublimitatis, ora.
Victor Vitiorum, ora.
Dux Minorum,
Prædicator Siluestrium, ora pro.
Portans dona Gloriæ, ora.
Auriga militiæ nostræ, ora.
Nouis vtens Prodigijs, ora.
Cælum cæcis aperiens, ora.
Gratum gerens obsequium, ora.
Templum Christo cõsecrans, ora.
Hostes malignos proterens, ora.
Tenens vitæ brauium, ora.

Spar-

Spargens virtutum munera, ora.
Amplians iter ad gloriam, ora.
Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, Parce nobis Domine.
Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, Exaudi nos Domine.
Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere nobis.

℣ Ora pro nobis beate Pater Francisce.

℟. Vt digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

Oremus.

DEus qui Ecclesiã tuam B Francisci meritis fœtu nouæ prolis amplificas: tribue nobis ex eius imitatione terrena despicere, & cælestium donorum sẽper participatione gaudere. Per Dominum nostrum, &c. Amen.

LITA-

LITANIÆ B. M. N. CLARÆ VIRGINIS.

Kyrie eleyſon, Chriſte eleyſon Kyrie eleyſon. Chriſte audi nos. Chriſte exaudi nos.
Pater de cælis Deus, Miſerere nobis,
Fili Redemptor mundi Deus, Mi.
Spiritus Sancte Deus, Miſ.
Sancta Trinitas vnus Deus, Miſ.
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis.
Sancta Dei Genitrix, ora.
Sancta virgo Virginum, ora.
S. Clara virgo Mater noſtra, ora.
Virgo Chriſti Sponſa, ora.
Virgo Franciſci plantula, ora.
Virgo electa præ millibus, ora.
Virgo Seraphica, ora.
Virgo Matris Ieſu diſcipula, ora.

Virgo

Virgo primogenita pauperũ, ora.
Virgo gemma Virginum, ora.
Virgo norma Perfectionis, ora.
Virgo humillima, ora.
Virgo mundo abſcondita, ora.
Virgo ſpeculum Paupertatis, ora.
Virgo Lilium caſtitatis, ora.
Virgo roſa pœnitentiæ, ora.
Virgo Crucifixi amore ſaucia, ora.
Virgo crucis ardẽtiſſima amatrix,
Virgo ſtella clariſſima, ora.
Virgo ſequens Agnum quocunque ierit, ora.
Mater noſtra honorificata, ora.
Mater admirabilis, ora.
Mater amabilis, ora.
Mater ſicut balſamũ aromatizãs,
Mater paranympha Chriſti, ora.
Mater pulchræ dilectionis, ora.
Mater puritatis nutrix, ora.
Mater Obedientiæ magiſtra, ora.

Mater

Mater scala Paradisi, ora.
Mater gloria Filiarum, ora.
Mater socia Angelorum, ora.
Mater clipeus in tē sperantiū, ora.
Mater protectrix Pauperum, ora.
Mater consolatrix flentium, ora.
Mater terror Infidelium, ora.
Ma. triumphatrix dæmonū, ora.
Agnus Dei qui tollis. Parce &c.
Agnus Dei. Exaudi nos &c.
Agnus Dei. Miserere nobis.

℣. Ora pro nobis Beata mater Clara. ℟. Vt digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi. *Oremus.*

FAmulos tuos quæsumus Dñe, beatæ virginis tuæ Claræ votiuā cōmemorationē recensentes, cælestiū gaudiorum sua facias interuētione participes, & tui Vnigeniti cohæredes. Per Dominum nostrū &c. Amen.

FINIS.

THE ADMIRABLE LIFE OF THE HOLY VIRGIN S. CATHARINE OF BOLOGNA,

Abbesse of the Monastery, of the sacred Virgins of the Order of S. CLARE, in the Citty of Bologna.

Translated into English,

By Sister Magdalen of S. Augustine, of the Order of Poore Clares in Grauelinge.

Permissu Superiorũ M. DC. XXI.

GOOD READER,

To this Life of Saint Catharine, are added many profitable and wholsome Instructions, left written by her owne hand, in the vulgar Italian, to her Sisters of the forsayd Monastery of S. Clare, in Bologna.

THE

THE ADMIRABLE LIFE OF THE HOLY VIRGIN S. CATHARINE of Bologna.

SAINT Catharine Virgin to whom the Citty of Bologna her natiue Coûtrey hath giuen the Sur-

name, had for her Father *Iohn* a Citizen of *Ferrara*, of the noble Family of the *Virginij*, a man indued with many vertues, and excellent gifts of nature, abundantly adorned with all good learning, very commendable for his integrity of life, and good manners; & for his vertues much honoured in the Court of the most Illustrious Prince *Nicolas D'Est*, and by him greatly imployed in publicke Offices, and Functions.

Her mother was named *Beneuenta*, native also of *Bologna*, neere approaching to the perfections of her husband: and by the daughter euery one may iudge, what the father and mother were. She was borne in the Citty of *Bologna* aforesaid, the yeare of our

Lord 1413. the 8. day of September, being the feast of the nativity of the glorious Virgin mother of God, who the night before her happy birth, aduertised *Iohn* her Father, being thē at *Padua*, therof, and told him that she should be a great light throughout the whole world. In her Birth she was exempt from weeping and crying common vnto all other Children, and for three whole dayes she would not take the pappe, nor tast any other meat or nourishment; a presage certainly of her great future sanctity and austerity. She passed the first yeares of her age at *Bologna*, as appeareth by a letter of hers, wherein she sayth, that she was borne and brought vp at *Bologna*. Afterwards by the will

and apointment of her Father, she was brought vnto *Ferrara*, where with the Lady *Margarite*, daughter to the Prince aboue mentioned, she liued and conuersed very familiarly.

In her tender yeares she was indued with a ripe and mature prudence, a rare and singular modesty, beauty, & admirable comelines, ioyned with an excellent carriage, and behauiour; so as it might be easily coniectured, that she would in tyme become an incomparable patterne & example of all vertue. For this tender Virgin whose soule was already wholy conuersant in heauen, despising and setting at naught all transitory riches and delights, and all things which are accustomed to

intangle

intangle and poſſeſſe the minds of worldlings (yea the very Courts of moſt Princes) neuer ceaſed vntill by the leaue of her Parents ſhe entred into the Monaſtery of *Corpus Chriſti*, which is of Religious Virgins, dedicated and conſecrated to Saint *Clare*, to the end that all impediments being taken away, ſhe might wholy giue her ſelfe vnto Ieſus Chriſt, vpon whō night and day, were her only thoughts fixed: which ſhe effected the yeare of our Lord 1414. the 11. yeare of her age.

Being thus ſeparated from all terreſtriall occupations, ſhe began to ſerue God with ſo great feruour of ſpirit, that it was admirable to euery one, and they did euen then foreſee, that ſhe would

be such an one as afterwards she proued to be. She was indued with so great courtesy and meeknes, such Reuerence and Obedience she shewed towards those with whome she conuersed and liued, that she was most amiable and pleasing vnto all: and notwithstanding, for that she was young, and as yet a Child, they could not choose but honour her, yet she despised all things excepting those which belonged vnto God and his holy seruice: she presently banished farre from her all thought and care of her neerest Parents, and kindred: she had a continuall care, and an vnspeakable compassion of sinners, for whome she made feruent prayers, and frequent supplications vnto God;

God; and how ardently and earneſtly ſhe deſired their ſaluation, one thing only very notable and worthy of memory may giue ample teſtimony, which is, that with great affection ſhe deſired & beſought God that the paines and torments of all the damned might be inflicted vpon her, euen in the very bottome of hell, to the end that by the damnation of her alone, all others might be deliuered from payne, and be ſaued: which thing ſhe hath left written in her little Booke of *diuine Inſtructions*, which I haue lately tranſlated out of the vulgar *Italian* into Latin, which is heerunto alſo adioyned.

In all places, and with whō-ſoeuer ſhe was, ſhe either did

speke of God, or with God; so that her body being vpon earth, her spirit was not withstanding a continuall and perpetuall Cittizen of heauen. And although she were afflicted with great temptations, & suffered vnsupportable assaults and combats of the enemy; yet she notwithstanding no lesse patiently then willingly endured all for the loue of God. In her gate she shewed alwayes a ioyfull coûtenance, with a tempered grauity, halfe smiling: She did not permit the time to passe away without profit, being mindfull that there is nothing for which we must giue more strict & exact account, then for the imploying of our tyme.

No idle word euer came forth of her mouth: Nor any word

word which might in any sort be offensiue to the hearers: In briefe she was so admirable in all her actions vnto euery one, that in her they might see and behold a mirrour and modell of all vertues.

Her principall care, and the thing wherunto she most willingly applyed her selfe, was for the loue of Iesus to be so despised of euery one, that euen she desired to be reputed and accounted for a foole. And as she thought her selfe to be the most contemptible of all mortalls, so in like sort she desired to be held, and esteemed by euery one: It is a thing incredible how much she despised her selfe, and desired to be contemned of others; that therby she might become more gracious with God, and

and imitate Iesus Christ, as neere as might be in that vertue, whose whole life she knew to haue byn no other then a true and perfect example of consumated humility, & that for this cause he sayd in his Ghospell, *Take my yoke vpon you, and learne of me, for that I am meeke and humble of hart.* And truly there is no vertue wherby one may so well professe and declare himselfe to be a Christian, as by that.

This holy Virgin then who studied for nothing more then to imbrace this vertue, to grow more and more in Gods fauour, and to be a true imitatour of Iesus Christ, referred all her study, care, and diligence thereunto, the same being the firme and solide foundation of all Christian Religion: the

which

which being taken away, all other vertues faile, perish, and come to nothing. All those who haue ariued to heauen, and obtayned eternall happines, haue trodden & beaten this way. For this cause our Virgin, as well in her workes as words, did in a certayne inexplicable manner shew her selfe so sweetly mild, & patient, towards euery one that she neyther did or sayd any thing which did not sauour of admirable humility.

For this cause also, she went very meanely attired, thinking her selfe the least & loweſt of all, preferring all others before her selfe, subiecting her selfe vnto all, being very desirous to obay euery one, which indeed was her principall care and study. She intreated

to be imployed in the moſt baſe & abiect Offices, and ſerued both the ſicke and ſound, with ſo great charity, promptitude, and alacrity, that ſhe did not refuſe or ſhun any thing how laborious or loathſome ſoeuer it were. Hence did ſpring in her that great and notable vertue, the moſt indiſſoluble knot and firme band of all Religion, and foundation therof, to to wit holy Obedience, of which ſhe hath left an example, moſt worthy of memory. She being alwayes moſt prompt and ready to obay any who would command her, one day one of her ſiſters in Religion eyther through indiſcretion, or els mooued with compaſſion had her not labour ſo much nor ſo ſubmit her ſelfe vnto all, as

if she were seruant to euery one? wherunto very modestly & with a pleasant coũtenance she answered in this sort: *Am not I the seruãt and handmayd of these Dames, my Mistresses the Spouses of Iesus Christ?* It is my glory, and cheefest comfort, to labour for euey one, fearing least I should eat the bread of sorrow, and drinke the bloud of the poore, to my great hurt and domage?

She being now famous by reason of this vertue, some, who had the power to cõmand her, desiring to try her, enioyned her to put of her cloaths, & to goe naked to her mother, and returne in the same sort: wherunto obaying readily, she began to vncloath her self, but presently they caused her to

cease.

ceaſe. One day alſo for trialls ſake ſhe was commaunded to caſt her ſelfe into the midſt of the fire, the which ſhe promptly and immediatly going about to execute, was hindred and ſtayed by thoſe that were preſent. And it is no maruell through ſo often, ſo willingly, and with ſuch care and ſollicitude ſhe doth treat and diſcourſe of this vertue in that little Booke aboue mentioned, ſeing ſhe preferred it alone before all other, affirming that there is not any auſterity of life, or maceration of the body to be compared vnto it, and therfore with all poſſible diligete ſhe exhorted and incited all Religious and Sacred Virgins thereunto.

She attended and applyed her

her ſelfe with an admirable diligence to prayer and contemplation, nothing being more ſweete and pleaſant vnto her; the which our ancient enemy ſeeing, he began by that occaſion to lay his ſnares for her, ſuggeſting vnto her an exceeding great deſire of ſolitude, with wonderfull teadiouſnes & weariſomnes of the monaſtery; perſwading her, that in ſolitude ſhe might much better according to her deſire attend vnto prayer. This deſire was moſt vehement, the enemy daily egging her forward, and inciting her to forſake the monaſtery, and to ſeeke ſome deſert place. She being ignorant whether this counſayle were profitable for her, and pleaſing vnto God, moſt inſtantly

beſought his diuine maieſty to vouchſafe to manifeſt his will and pleaſure vnto her.

Her prayer was heard, and ſhe admoniſhed, that euery one ought to ſtay in the place whereunto God hath called them. Now following this diuine counſayle, ſhe vnderſtood that the former ſuggeſtion was a deceipt of the enemy, of whome ſhe endured many other continuall aſſaults, & combats; with which although ſhe were continually and aboue meaſure tormented and afflicted, and that it ſeemed that the diuine loue was withdrawne and ſubſtracted from her, yet notwithſtanding the ayd and help of God did neuer fayle her, ſo that ſhe remayned victorious, and in the

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end triumphed moſt gloriouſly. Three ſeueral times this craftyennemy deceaued her vnder the venerable forme of Ieſus Chriſt crucifyed, and of the glorious virgin his mother, holding in her armes her little child Ieſus, ſo that ſhe belieued that it was truly and really Ieſus Chriſt and his glorious Mother. The which (as ſhe ſayth her ſelfe in her little diſcourſe) did happen vnto her for no other occaſion, but for as much as through a certayne ouer great confidence ſhe had in the gifts of God, ſhe perſwaded her ſelfe that there was no fraud and deceipt of the enemy ſo ſubtile, which ſhe did not know; which fault ſhe redeemed by long and grieuous torments which ſhe did ſuffer and vndergoe, in ſo

much that she was often mooued and stirred vp to despayre. And therfore in her little worke she exhorteth with great diligence her sacred Virgins that no one should so much rely and presume of her owne perfection, as to trust & confide in her selfe.

I passe ouer many such like things for breuityes sake, the which in fine being by her ouercome, she began from thence forward to enioy great peace & tranquility; and her former feruour and the sweetnes of the diuine loue which a long tyme before she had fealt, was restored vnto her.

Moreouer she was so attentiue and addicted vnto prayer, that one day hauing ouer much

wearyed

wearyed and tired her selfe therin, she fell into a heauy sleepe, in which the most Famous and glorious martyr Saint *Thomas* Bishop of *Canterbury* appeared vnto her, vested with his Pontificall Robes, who taught her that she was to keep a meane & measure in prayer, after which rest is necessary, & requisit, & hauing recouered new forces, then to returne theruntoagaine. Of the which when he had aduised her, he drew neere vnto her, and gaue her his sacred hand to kisse, and she awaking kissed it very reuerently: which being done, the Saint vanished out of her sight. This she testifyeth herselfe in a certayne place of a Breuiary which she writte with her owne hand: the wordes are

these: *For Saint Thomas of Canterbury the most glorious and worthy martyr, who hath shewed me his most holy handes, I haue kissed them sweetly with my hart and body. I haue written this to the prayse of God and of him, and haue discouered it in all verity.*

And what she practised concerning prayer herselfe, she instructed and exhorted others vnto saying that seauen thinges were required for perfect prayer. The first, to haue both soule and body pure and cleane from all spot and staine of sinne. The second, the force and efficacy of intention, & in all things a vehement desire of the diuine honour. The third, the efficacy of perseuerance, and forgetfulnes of the good which we haue

haue done, beginning dayly to do better. The forth, great & profoũd humility, not only for our owne ſinnes, and offences, but alſo for thoſe which all the ſinners in the world haue cõmitted, with great and earneſt deſire to ſatisfy for them. The fifth, not to truſt nor confide in our ſelues, or rely vpon our owne opinion, but to ſuſpect all our workes how good ſoeuer they be, it being exceeding great folly to ſwell with the vice of oſtentation, ſith that true, and ſolide perfection, conſiſteth in bearing paynfull & laborious Croſſes. The ſixt, to caſt our hope in all thinges vpon God, ſeeing, that he will neuer forſake thoſe that truſt and confide in him. The ſeauenth and laſt, the preſence of

God: for the ſoule which is adorned with the aforeſayd conditions, is truly made worthy of the diuine preſence and in ſuch ſort, that at all tymes ſhe may without any preeedent preparation liſt vp and eleuate herſelfe vnto God. She likewiſe admoniſhed, that thoſe that had attained to ſo high a degree, ſhould neuer become proud, but remaine alwaies humble, fearing to fall from that dignity and ſublimity to the bottomles depth.

Many heauenly ſecrets were reuealed vnto this holy Virgin, amõgſt the which we haue thought this to be worthy of memory. The night before the Natiuity of our Lord ſhe obtayned licence & permiſſion to watch, and paſſe that night

night in the Church, where she resolued in honour of the Glorious Virgin and Mother of God, to recite and say ouer a thousand times the Angelical salutation *Aue Maria*. Continuing in this Deuotion vnto the fourth houre of the night, at which houre as she hath left written, she did belieue that Iesus Christ was borne; the Virgin mother appeared vnto her, holding her little Child Iesus in her armes: and this vision was not imaginary but true, and reall, & the one and the other of the two sacred persõs appearing were palpable, and to be handled.

The Celestiall Mother did then sweetly and familiarly discourse with our sacred Virgin, & gaue her her little sonne to im-

brace & warme him in her armes: she receaued him with incredible ioy and reuerence, and hauing held him sometime, ioyning her mouth vnto his, this celestiall iewell disappeared. The ioy which she receaued in this vision is not to be conceaued, much lesse expressed. It was also shewed vnto her by many excellent reasons & figures, how in the consecrated host, true God & true man is, about which she was a long tyme with great anxiety tempted. She was in like sort instructed in the mystery of the holy *Trinity*, and it was God himself who taught her these things, as she herselfe doth declare in her little treatise, and likewise in her Breuiary, where she sayth; *I haue seene it, and vnderstood it,*

it, by the grace of God.

She was moreouer taught and instructed how our Lord was incarnate in the wombe of the sacred Virgin. One day whilest she did assist at the holy sacrifice of the Masse, the Priest being come to the pronouncing of *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*, she heard the Angels with Celestiall and heauenly melody repeat the same wordes. The harmony, and sweetnes, of which song was so great, that her soule was almost like to depart forth of her body, although the Angels did leaue the word halfe vnpronounced: for without all doubt if this diuine song had continued a little longer, she would haue fallen dead on the ground. She did see two seuerall tymes the most

moſt Bleſſed and Seraphicall Father Saint Francis, as ſhe hath left written in the fornamed Breuiary: where we read, *I haue ſeene S. Francis my Father two ſeueral times, God knoweth that I lye not.*

She obtained by her prayers that certayne ſoules ſhould not be damned: and for one of them, ſhe ſayd that ſhe was ready and willing to ſuffer the paines of Purgatory vntill the day of the vniuerſall and generall Iudgment. Moreouer, by her prayers ſhe reclaymed into the right way of ſaluation, ſome perſons who deſpayring of the mercy of God, did implore the ayde and ſuccour of the wicked ſpirits. She ſaw alſo with her corporall eyes the diuell retire and depart in the likenes of

ſmoake

ſmoake from a certaine man, after he had almoſt ſtrangled him, becauſe he would wholy forſake his fold. She alſo obtayned of God by her prayers that the noble & Illuſtrious Margarit daughter of the aboue mentioned Nicolas D'Eſt Prince of Ferrara receaued the accompliſhment of her deſires: for it being ſo that after the Death of the Bleſſed Robert Malateſte her husband, her parents had her promiſed vnto another, which was a wonderfull griefe and affliction vnto her, ſhe being deſirous after her firſt husband ſo worthy and holy, not to be matched vnto any other man: it happened that the day on which ſhe ſhould be lead to her ſecond husband, newes came that he was dead. The night

f llowing she saw her first and holy husband comming vnto her, who againe espoused her, and said vnto her, Margarite I am your espouse, and I will not haue you matched and conioyned to any other. And so from thence forward she perseuered constant in her widdow-hood, and liued in great honour and reputation.

This holy Virgin did also forsee many thinges by the spirit of prophesy, and as they say, she did fortell things to come, as the warres which Philip Duke of Millan attempted agaynst the Bolonians, Lewis Verma being the Captaine and conductour of his army: and she praying for her Countrey, propheſied that the Bolonians should returne victori-

ous,

ous, the which came to passe; for Hanibal Bentiuoglio at that tyme cheefe Gentleman of the Citty with the people of Bologna, valiantly encountring those of Millan, ouerthrew them, and put thē to flight with their Captayne, the which our holy Virgin had fortold in the same sort as it fell out. She forsaw also the ruine and destruction of the East Empire, and the taking of the Citty of Constantinople, for the which whilst that she prayed, that the Christian Empire might not fall vnder the power of the Turke, she was admonished by God to leaue of her prayer for that end, and that for the sinnes and impietyes of the Grecians, that Empire should be cut off from the Christiā body, & the

the ſucceſſe did manifeſtly declare that her propheſy was true. She merited by her prayers to ſee the ſoule of her ſiſter placed in heauē, and the ſoule of Iohn Bishop of Ferrara about three of the clock in the morning aſcending to heauen, wherat she called one of her ſacred Virgins saying, *behold the ſoule of our Biſhop who like a radiant ſtarre aſcendeth to heauen*. It is alſo worthy of memory what happened at that time when Saint *Bernardin* was inrolled into the Catologue of Saints, whome she beſought, and obtayned of him, that her Father might be reduced to the way of ſaluation, from which he was at that tyme wholy gone aſtray.

I wil not paſſe vnder ſilence, how

how God with his owne mouth commanded her not to refuse the gouernment & superiority of the Monastery of Bologna, to the which she had bin chosen, and elected. With which election the Diuell was so enraged, that as she hath affirmed he oftentimes went about to ouerthrow the Monastery, and to blot out and deface her name, but that by her prayers she resisted him, so that vaine were his endeauours, somety mes howling like a wolfe, at other times roaring like a Lion, but seing that he could in no sort hurt her, he began to stand in feare of her, and of the force and vertue of her prayers: And our holy Virgin to despise & contemne him.

Theſe were great tokēs & manifeſt ſignes of her admirable ſanctity, the which comming dayly to be manifeſted more and more, and her name growing famous euery where, the ſacred Virgins of the Monaſtery of Ferrara in the firſt yeares of the incloſure of their monaſtery, receauing a cōmandemēt by letters from the Apoſtolicall ſea, to chooſe amongſt themſelues a Superiour vulgarly called Abbeſſe, and therunto preſently obaying, they all with one accord cōcluded to chooſe our Virgin for their Superiour. She knowith thereof who alwayes earneſtly deſired not to commaund, but to be ſubiect, and to be the ſeruant of euery one, conceaued great ſorrow, and ſhed ſuch aboundance

boundance of teares, that being almost ready to faint, and sound, her griefe and abundant weeping drew as it were by force all the other Virgins to weep with her. Afterwards when these sacred Virgins would establish two other Monasteryes, the one at *Cremona*, and the other at *Bologna*, they resolued amongst themselues to make our holy Virgin Superiour of one of the two: but she would neuer consent thereunto, vntill such tyme as the will of God were apparently known vnto her. The which being manifested vnto her, she most willingly accepted the charge, which was committed vnto her by *Leonarda* the venerable and Reuerend Abbesse of the Monastery of *Ferrara*, at the request

of certayne Cittizens of *Bologna*.

For they being sent vnto the aforesayd Abbesse, to beseech her to depute some of her sacred Virgins worthy of the administration and gouernment of their monastery, she answered promising that she should giue them another S. *Clare*: which promise she truly & manifestly accomplished, by giuing them this holy Virgin. Then the venerable Fathers chosen of the Order of the Friars Minors of the Regular Obseruance, to wit Father Francis Tinturier, Father Iames Primadis, and Father Gabriell of *Bologna*, commanded her that seing she was natiue of *Bologna*, from thence forward she should be called *Catharin of Bologna*, whereunto she obayed, and

retayned

retained perpetually the surname of her natiue Countrey. By this act was declared & made knowne a certayne vision which before had byn shewed to our holy Virgin, wherein she saw two seates most magnificently and stately adorned, of the which one was far more sumptuous & glorious thē the other, which she beheld with great admiration, and attention, and demanding for whome they were, it was answered her, that the greatest and best adorned was for *Cathrin* of *Bologna*.

Our holy Virgin when in this sort she was chosen for Superiour of the monastery of *Bologna*, was very sicke, and in such sort that they doubted much of her life, notwithstanding she could not be

hindered (so carefull was she to performe the obedience to satisfy her charge) but presently she went to take vpō her the forsaid gouernement. She was carryed forth of the monastery first in a Litter, and then in a Chayre to the boate. In comming forth of the monastery she was so tired with that labour, and her forces so debilitated, that they gaue an hallowed candle to those that did accompany her, that she might therby receaue (according to the custome of Christians that are dying) the benediction of the Church, if it should come to passe (which they feared) that she should be preuented by death in the way. But see now a thing most admirable, for she was no sooner in the boate, but her for-

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mor ſtrength beganne to returne, and ſhe felt her ſelfe much abettered, & ſo reſted without any hindrance or impediment, in ſuch ſort that ſhe ariued ſafe at *Bologna*, at her Monaſtery in the month of Iuly, vpō the feaſt of the glorious S. *Mary Magdalen*, the 4. yeare of her age.

After her ariuall at the Monaſtery, there paſſed three whole dayes wherin not only the ſacred Virgins who receaued her with incredible ioy, but alſo a great cōcourſe of all the Cittizens of the Citty came to ſee and viſit her, ſhewing great tokens and ſignes of wonderfull ioy, not being able ſufficiently to admire her ſweet & graue familiarity, the meeknes & mildnes of her behauiour, & car-

riage, her beauty, and comlines, the wisdome and sanctity which shined in her, and accompanyed her words, and all her actions. She was chosen to this office, the yeare of our Lord 1456. and the aforesayd yeare of her age.

The monastery of Bologna was when she came thither very little, and of small account, but this holy Virgin obtayned so much of God by her prayers, that by the meanes of many of the Citty who came & consecrated their Virginity vnto God, lime, stones, wood, & all other things requisite for the building of the Monastery were dayly most liberally giuen, so that in short tyme the monastery so increased not only in nũber of Virgins, but in building al-

so,

so, that in compasse and greatnes it doth equalize some little villages. In the meane tyme this holy Virgin spared not any paine or labour, to help those Religious Virgins that they might more cõmodiously serue God. Now after that she had a long tyme, with great diligence vndergone these labours, and suffered many great sicknesses, as great paynes in her head, the Emmerods with great effusion of bloud, and feuers, her body being worne, became very ready and subiect to take any disease. So she fell into a great sicknes, and thinking that her last day was at hand, she commanded a Bed to be made in the middest of the chãber for her, to the end she might the more commodiously

ſpeake vnto al. There with a graue diſcourſe and diſtinctly pronounced, ſhe exhorted al her Religious Virgins to keep peace and concord, and told them what ſhe thought would make them to become daily more and more gratefull vnto God.

The grieuouſnes of her ſicknes did howerly increaſe, that it ſeemed that within a very ſhort while ſhe ſhould haue departed this life, when on the ſuddaine ſhe was depriued of her corporal ſēſes, and rapt in ſpirit, and lead into a moſt admirable pleaſant & beautifull meadow. In the middeſt whereof ſate a mighty Prince in a Throne of Maieſty, which ſhined with vnſpeakable and admirable glory. At the two vpper

postes of the Throne, stood Saint Laurence on the one side, and Saint Vincent on the other, on al sides inuironed with many Angels; and on the right side of the Throne stood the Mother of the Prince.

This diuine spectacle was most worthy of admiration, there being no words able to expresse the wonderfull glory and maiesty thereof. Right ouer agaynst the Prince before his throne, was one that played vpon an instrument of cordes called the harp, and he distinctly pronounced these words, *Et gloria eius in te videbitur*, & his glory shall be seene in thee. There was no other thing heard but a repetition of the same words; and the Prince stretching forth his

right

right hand, tooke our Virgin by the hand and sayd; *My daughter giue diligent eare & attention to this song, and consider well what is signifyed by these words, And his glory shall be seene in thee.* As she stood greatly amazed at the presence & maiesty of so great a diuinity, not presuming nor knowing what to answere, the Prince himselfe opened and declared the matter vnto her, and told her that she should recouer of her present sicknes. That being sayd the vision vanished out of sight, and she being returned to her selfe found her selfe something better, her body to haue recouered former strength, & soon after she was wel.

Of this vision there is a double signification, and interpretation, the

the one, that in her there should be seene, the glory of the Crosse of Iesus Christ, the which she carryed about in her body, with great patience, desire & content, always exhorting her Virgins to doe the like. How willingly she disired to suffer for Iesus Christ, she giueth sufficient testimony in the Booke she composed. The other explication is, that the glory of God should be seene in her, by the conseruation of her body from corruption, and the most sweet odoriferous liquor that issueth from it, curing the infirmityes & maladyes of all that in due manner implore her ayd, and assistance; of the which we will produce and alleage sundry examples in due place. She had without doubt dyed

ed at this tyme, had not the prayers of her sacred Virgins (who tooke her death with great griefe and affliction) inclined the clemēcy and goodnes of God to graunt her longer life for their comfort.

None is able to declare the excesse of ioy wherwith our holy virgin was repleniſhed by reaſō of this viſion, repeating oftentymes after that ſhe came to herſelf thoſe wordes, *And his glory ſhall be ſeene in thee*: ſo that her ſiſters for the increaſe of comfort, and eaſe of her ſicknes, got a Lute on which playing ſhe would in a moſt ſweet and diuine tune ſinge this ditty, *and his glory ſhall be ſeene in thee*. ſhe many tymes lay ſpeachles as it were in a trance with her face towards heauen calling to mind the melody

melody of the diuine harp of Dauid. Her ſacred Virgins did admire & were aſtonished with the ſweetnes of this harmony, yet could not but weep, she being ſtill very ſicke, ſo as they feared they ſhould be left & forſaken by her: whereupon she comforted them, aſſuring them that she should not dye of that ſickneſſe, adding further, that she beſought God to pardon thoſe that had hindred her death, and ſo riſing from her bed although weake, & not perfectly recouered, ſhe returned to her ordinary charge, labouring as her cuſtome was with the reſt.

In this ſort she paſſed a whole yeare without any diſturbance, to the profit & cõfort of her ſiſters, by reaſon of many graue & diuine

inſtruc-

instructions proceeding from her mouth, replenished with the holy Ghost. This tyme expired, knowing that the last terme of her life approached, before the grieuousnes of sicknes which she saw was not far of, surprised her, vpon a Friday she caused all her daughters to be assembled, to whome (as they say) she discoursed for the space of three houres. First she aduertised them, that the day of her death was at hand, and that therfore she was desirous to speake vnto them, & to admonish them as a louing mother before imminent sicknes by extremity of paine should depriue her of meanes and ability to performe that last duty.

Then with a graue & mouing discourse, hauing spoken of all

all thoſe vertues wherunto ſhe had before times often exhorted them and which might make them pleaſing ſeruants and gratious handmaides of our Lord and maker. Towards the end after a moſt exact ſpeach of the peace and concord which they ought to haue amongſt themſelues, ſhe ſhewed and declared, that it was a ſummary wherunto all Chriſtian vertues were referred, the treaſure which Ieſus Chriſt being to aſcēd left aboue all things to be kept by his Apoſtles; which ſhe liuing aboue all other things with ſuch care and dilligence had recommeaded vnto them, & now dying would bequeath vnto them to obſerue, becauſe it being impoſſible to pleaſe God without charity;

that they should support the infirmityes of ech other, beare patiently with their sisters faults, endure constantly for the loue of Iesus Christ all euills which might befall them, setting before their eyes her example, that had alwayes vehemently desired to suffer all kind of Crosses, and had vndergone them with ioy, to the end that (as it is the duty of a Christian) she might imitate Iesus her Maister, & carry his Crosse, from which whosoeuer doth fly cannot rightly call himselfe a Christian. These and many other things which might confirme and strengthen them in their vndertaken course of perfection she spake in that her last exhortation, like the swanne whose funerall song is sweetest.

For

For on the Sunday following hauing ſupped with them, a little after, ſhe was oppreſſed with great paynes which had afflicted her almoſt for the ſpace of 28. yeares, conſtrayning her to lye downe on her bed from which ſhe neuer roſe. On the tueſday following ſhe called for her Confeſſarius with whome ſhe ſpake a long tyme; & then lifting vp her eyes to heauen ſhe ſayd, O good Ieſus, if it had pleaſed thee thou mighteſt haue differred this my ſicknes, vnti l ſuch time as I had renounced my Prelacy and ſeene her ſubrogated in my place, that ſhould haue ſucceeded me, that being ſo contented and my deſire accompliſhed, I might haue departed forth of this life obedient and ſubiect to an

other, but sith such is not thy diuine pleasure, thy will be done & not mine.

The next day which was the last of her sicknes, about the fourteenth houre of the day, which is about 8. a clocke in the morning according to our account, she cõmanded her Cõfessarius should be sẽt for againe, & that they should make ready a place for the holy Oyles, with candles and holy water, and set before for her a picture of Iesus crucifyed, which thinges were prepared with great diligẽce. The sacred Virgins amazed at so sudden an accident, and therby coniecturing that she was soone to depart, she then made this short speach vnto them.

Sisters & deere daughters, I goe

I goe now, neuer more to returne, nor to be from hence forward with you: know and assure your selues, that I will far more after my decease assist you then euer I did in this life. Walke by the way of Gods commandments, and the pathes which I haue trodden before you, myndfull of mutuall charity, peace, and concord, wherunto as you know I haue alwayes exhorted you. For peace is the hereditary treasure which cometh vnto vs frō Iesus Christ, who (returning to his Father) left it by testament, not only to his Apostles, but also to all Christians, and you must thinke that you are also made heyres therof. This is the treasure which Iesus Christ loueth so much, and exacteth of

those that are his, of which if you be carefull as you ought, assure your selues all things will prosper with you. This wil cause you, if any thing in your sisters be offesiue patiently to support it, and haue pitty and compassion on them: neyther is there any thing which you ought more to detest and abhorre then the causes of discord: you are of sufficient and ripe age, you need not any more to be instructed in the right way.

I recommend vnto you the yong Virgins heer present, and those that shall be receaued hereafter, and my Vicaresse who hath byn so sweet and faythfull a Sister, yea a nurse vnto me. Moreouer I desire that you take great heed not to giue occasion to any

to

to goe from this place vnto any other, or to come from any other to this: and if any shall contemne this my counsayle, I will pray that God punish & chastize her in this life according to her deserts. Feare God and render him due loue and honour, being alwayes ready and prepared to vndergoe all sorts of Crosses and myseries rather then to commit the least offence against his commandements. Conserue carefully the good name gayned both to your selues, and to this holy Monastery, which to this present day hath not as yet in any sort byn blemished. If you performe these things, you shall truly be my daughters, and you shall find that I will neuer forsake you.

By these wordes the Religious Virgins knowing manifestly that they should soone be depriued of her sweet and amiable presence, were surprized with great griefe, and sorrow, that all in the place brake out into teares and lamentations. Their griefe was the greater and more intollerable in that her death was so suddaine and vnexpected of them all, for although some dayes before she had byn sicke, yet seing her so ioyful, they apprehended nothing lesse then her death. During the dayes of her sickner, the holy Virgin commaunded that they should sing oftē vnto her this himn which iscōmon, & in rithme in the vulgar, beginning in this sort.

O Soule beloued of thy high Creatour,

Behold,

Behold, and see thy soueraygne Dominatour,
VVho with his fastned armes extended wide,
Thee to imbrace expecting doth abide.

In the meane tyme the sacred Virgins, continuing their teares and lamentations, for her approaching death, their pious mother turning her selfe towards them, requested them most amiably and louingly, to surcease from teares, adding and affirming that those should not be her daughters who would not leaue of weeping, seing they had more reason to reioyce with her going forth of the miserable prison of this life vnto so great felicity.

Vpon these words she presently turned her selfe to the Por-

treſſe, and bad her goe ſpeedily to the gate, for that her venerable Confeſſarius whome ſhe had ſent for, was there attending, which they found to be true, and his ariuall with ſo much ſpeed was eſteemed aboue humane power, and that the knowledge which the holy Virgin had that he was come & ſtood ringing at the gate was by the diuine diſpenſation. No leſſe admirable is it that after her Confeſſion, the Prieſt being to adminiſter vnto her the Sacraments, & not finding readily in his booke the things that are accuſtomed to be read at ſuch a tyme, the holy Virgin, by the inſtinct of the holy Ghoſt ſayd vnto him: Seek Father in the middeſt of the booke in ſuch a place, and you ſhall find what

what you desire, & so it was. Whē the mercifull mother was now refreshed with the bread of life, turning her selfe towards her Religious Cōpany she sayd vnto them.

My deere daughters and beloued Sisters, I beseech you al pardon me, if euer I haue in any sort by word or deed offended you, & pray not the lesse vnto God for me: and then with an admirable and most ioyfull coūtenance she lifted vp her eyes to heauen: and agayne to behold her Religious and to giue them her last farewell she cast downe her sight, and pronouncing the name of Iesus three seuerall tymes, a little after with a most sweet sigh she breathd forth her Blessed Soule, on the ninth day of March, the yeare of our Lord. 1463.

1463. the 50. yeare of her age, and the 7. yeare of her Prelature in the Conuent of Bologna.

She seemed far more beautifull in her countenance, after death then in life, so that she might haue byn thought a young mayd but fifteene yeares of age that lay sleeping. Her departure was accompanyed with the teares and cryes of all the sacred Company throughout the whole monastery, most manifestly shewing how much they loued her: how much they grieued and sorrowed for so deere a losse, some of them when they saw her giue vp her Blessed Soule, fell downe in a sound, through the vehemency of griefe: on all sides most mournfull voices throughout the whole monastery were

were heard, some calling her their mother, others the mirrour of sacred Virgins, the glory of her monastery: others acknowledged themselues miserable & destitute of all counsayle, ayde, and comfort: others imbracing ech other, sent forth lamentable cryes to heauen, complaining of their misery and common losse.

After they had for some space of tyme thus satisfyed their sorrow, they carryed her sacred Corps into the Quire to celebrate her funerals, which being arriued before the place where the sacred body of our Blessed Sauiour is kept, the face of the deceased Virgin was seene by many, in a certayne admirable manner to shew signes of wonderfull ioy. Heere mourn-

mournfull lamentations were repeated, with new effusiõ of teares, some kissed her Face, others her hands, others her feete, others imbracing her, could not be drawne away: finally her funeralls were very solēnly & with great pompe performed, & her holy body layd in the ground, couered with a sheet, and an arch of wood rayssed ouer the body, to the end it might not be bruized with the earth.

From that time after they began to perceaue a most sweet and pleasant odour, proceeding from her tombe, and to see certayne beames of light to come forth, by which they were confirmed in the opinion they had that this holy Virgin was ascended into heauen,

uen. These thinges ioyned with her many vertuous examples, being true and certayne signes of her sanctity, as many of the Nuns as were detayned with any malady or sicknes, coming to her tombe, and inuocating her ayde were presently deliuered.

These many miraculous cures made those Virgins in some sort ashamed, that she who shined with so many wonders should be so meanly and poorly buryed, & couered with earth. Wherfore with the permission of the Fathers to whome that busines did belong, they resolued to open her graue, and to remooue to some more honorable place her most venerable reliques. Foure Virgins to whom that charge was committed prepa-

ring

ring themselues therunto, presently by the enuy and malice of wicked spirits, was rayſed a horrible tempeſt of raine, haile, thunder, and wind, accompanied with thicke darknes that not only they could not take her ſacred body, nor yet ſo much as find the place of her ſepulture.

The Religious Virgins that ſtood vnder the porch which enuironed the place of her holy ſhrine perceauing who was the author of that ſtorme, had recourſe vnto prayer., beſeeching God to appeaſe the tempeſt, which vpon their requeſt was preſently appeaſed. Notwithſtanding the horrour and thicknes of the darke night remayned ſtill, that in no ſort could they find the place,

where

where she had bin enterred. Whē one of the foure aduancing her selfe, arming her forhead with the signe of the Crosse, and inuocating the name of Iesus besought our Sauiour, that if he approoued that which they were going about and that it were his diuine will that the holy Virgins body should be taken vp, that he would dispersse the darknes of the night, & calme the ayre: her prayer was presently heard, and the whole place cleare with light from heauē, that by the shining of the starrs and splendour of the moone her sepulcher was plainely discouered, beames of light shooting downe directly vpon it, casting forth as it were from some new and aboue all the rest conspi-

cuous ſtarre, This heauenly encouragement made their worke eaſy, that the holy body was ſoone taken vp, and incloſed in a Coffin, prepared for it, that afterward they might entombe her agayne in a more decent & honorable ſhrine.

Carrying away that ſacred pledge, the foure Virgins (I know not by what accident) were forced to reſt in a porch neere adioining, whence preſently ſuch a ſweet fragrant and celeſtiall perfume was diffuſed and ſpread through the whole Monaſtery, that the Nunnes being aſtoniſhed, came running on all ſides, reioycing at ſo admirable a thing. They wiped away the duſt from her face and made cleane her garments, which were

were soyled and defiled with the earth that had bin cast vpō them. Her nose and her mouth which were bruised with the arch of wood that had bin pressed vpon her, were diuinely restablished & restored to their due forme and proportion, and forth of her nostills ran out bloud to the quanity as might fill an ordinary wine glasse, such as is accustomed to flow from a liuing body.

The Virgins intended as they had byn commanded to carry this holy body to the new shine prepared, bnt it came to passe by diuine permission that hauing taken it vp, they were enforced to carry it not to the graue but to the church. There being placed before the most holy and venerable Sacra-

met, her face was manifestly seene to become ioyfull, and her head three seuerall tymes to bow in signe of reuerence, with an effusio of the forsaid admirable smell, the fragrancy and sweetnes wherof seemed to rauish them from their senses, and take away their breath, so that astonished with the nouelty of the thing, they cryed oftentymes, Iesus, Iesus.

The face of the deceased Saint became still more and more beautifull at euery moment, coloured with a little red mixed with white, as one liuing, & in the prime of beauty and age. From all her body, but specially from her face, did perpetually proceed a sweat of most diuine & fragrant smell, which seemed sometimes

to

to change into the color of blond, & happy she thought herselfe that could gather some drops therof.

The renowne of so great things being diuulged ouer the Citty, many of the chiefe and principall Cittizens (hauing first obtayned licence of the most Reuerend Card. of the holy Crosse, who at that tyme was Legate of his Holynes in Bologna) came to behold and see with their eyes these wõderfull & great miracles: yea the Legate himselfe moued with the fame of these things, and also touched with religious deuotion, demanded to haue for himselfe the cloth which had bin about that sacred body in the tombe, & was imbrued in the forsayd miraculous liquour. He craued also to

haue a Coppy of the diuine bookes which this holy Virgin compoſed and writ with her owne hand. For the ſpace of ſeauen daies great multitude of people flocked from all parts to ſe her body, which was not corrupted in any place, no more then at the very firſt houre of her departure. Thoſe that ſaw her, did affirme that they had neuer ſeene body of any Saint more beautifull and odoriferous: the which many Kings and Princes paſſing by Bologna haue not diſdayned to viſit, and to do great honour and reuerence therunto.

Heere endeth the admirable life of Saint Catharine of Bologna.

DIVERS

DIVERS MIRACLES WROVGHT BY S. CATHARINE OF BOLOGNA after her death.

THE rare Sanctity of this Admirable Virgin being many and diuers waies famously knowne; God of

his infinit goodnes, after her Blessed departure, would make it far more famous and glorious by the greatnes, and number of miracles. I will recount some part of them, by which it will appeare how highly God hath honoured her, who whilst she liued did so much contemne herselfe.

In the first place, many Virgins of her owne monastery haue experieneed the benefit of her assistance, wherof some were troubled with headaches, others with paine of the breast, others of the side, & some with coldnes and debility of stomake, so that they could retaine no meate, others that by reason of continuall cares, perturbations, and afflictions of mind, could not take any rest. One of them

them hauing byn afflicted with payne in the ſynewe for the ſpace of eight yeares, by deuout innocating of this Saint, was freed frō her torment. Another who had ſo ſharp a cough that it made her full of wonderfull payne in her breaſt, was cured by cauſing her breaſt to be touched with the feete of this holy Virgin.

A certayne woman began to be ſicke of the plague, it appearing already in her throate with a vehement Feuer; ſhe implored the ſuccour of this holy Virgin, and preſently that contagious ſickneſs left her.

There was one who had thruſt through her finger with a knife, & ſeeking the ſame remedy was preſently cured.

A Religious of the Monastery of Saint Agnes, was twelue yeares grieuously afflicted with a payne in her head, but she imploring the ayd of this Virgin, found it.

Two Religious men of the monastery vulgarly called, at Bologna, Saint Michael of the wood, going to a place, were surprised with an excessiue great rayne, hauing no shelter to defend themselues. They besought our holy Virgin to assist them, and immediatly they proued her ayd; For all the way the rayne gaue them place not wetting them in any sort, no not so much as with one drop, although that on each side of them, raine fell very thicke.

Nicolas Campegius had a daughter dangerously sick, so that

of

of her recouery being wholy in despayre, all things were prepared for her as for a dead body: her mother moued with griefe, went for succor to this Virgin & caused the Body of her daughter who was at the point of death to be touched with her Relikes, & presently falling into a dead sleep, she thought that some Virgin lead her to the Body of S. Catharin, the which so soone as she had touched she awaked, and found her selfe whole. Her mother seing the miracle, and hauing at that tyme fiue sonnes sicke of a feuer, she hunge the said Relikes about their neckes, and they were all presently cured.

A noble woman had a Sonne in a certayne Monastery vehemently tempted to abandon it, & returne

returne to his former kind of life? His mother much afflicted therat, besought this holy Virgin, that her sonne might be confirmed in his former good resolution, and persevere vntill the end, which request she obtayned.

A young mayd for many years had both her feete & hands wrested out of ioint, so as she could not speake without great payne: besides she was torméted with an vncleane spirit. So soone as she had seene the holy Body, and eaten of the Bread which this holy Virgin had touched, she was delivered, and cured.

The eyes of a woman did so cõtinually run, that she could scarse see any thinge at all: as soone she touched the Relikes of this Saint she

she was cured, & receaued perfectly her sight.

Another that had her legges so putrifyed and corrupted, that she could not goe but on her knees, found the same succour & help.

A woman whose daughter was at the point of death, the Sacrament of Extreme Vnction being giuen her, imploring the succour of this Virgin, was heard.

Another who tormented with most grieuous & extreme paynes in her Breast that she was ready to rend and teare her selfe, found the like remedy so soone as she implored it.

The throate of a child was so swelled that he could not suck, and being euen ready to dye, by the touching of these holy Reliks

recone-

recouered.

Another child of three months old did fall from a floare twenty cubites from the ground, and through the violence of the fall, he lay foure houres as if he had bin sicke of the falling sickness, & his head was wonderfully swollen. His mother inuocated this holy Virgin, and the Child was cured, and his head instantly returned to the former state.

The eye of another was stroken out of his head, hanging as big as an egge, but by the former help his eye was restored into the due place.

A little girle grieuously sick of a Feuer, through vehemency of payne cried out night and day, and could not take any rest: her

mother

mother inuocated Saint Catharin to the end she would help her, and she was presently heard.

A young child being ready to giue vp the Ghost, no hope remayning of life, being touched with these holy Reliques was out of hand cured.

A woman tormented with a wonderfull payne in her eare, that she could not choose but cry out, the succour of this Virgin being implored, the payne was presently appeased.

A yong youth being in a consumption, and for many monthes not hauing stirred forth of his Bed, vowed vnto this Saint a Crowne of siluer guilt with gold, and was cured.

A young woman through vehement

hement griefe conceaued for the death of her husbād was bereaued of her wits: but by the praiers of the religious womē of the monastery, who implored the assistance of this Virgin she returned to her sound senses againe.

That which I will now recount vnto you, is more admirable.

A young man was at the same tyme troubled with diuers maladyes, in the head, liuer, splene, one part of his Body being blasted, one of his leggs so shrunke that his foote lay vnder the knee of the other. He washed himselfe with the water that had touched the Body of our holy Virgin, and presently his legge was stretched out to the length of an handes

breadth,

breadth, and a little after to the length of another, and more by little and little, in such sort that he could set his foote on the ground: afterward anoynting his forhead with the holy liquor which issued from her body, all his infirmityes departed together at once.

A young mayd who had the Kings Euill breaking out in many places of her throate, for the space of sixteene yeares, anoynted her selfe with the same liquor, and bound her throate with a cloth of this Virgin, and was cured.

That which followeth is memorable. A young girle of three yeares old cut the circle of her eye with a knife: it continued in that sort the space of nine yeares forth of the place, very blacke, & defor-

med, hanging downe on her face to the bignes of a nut, always running and burning. By the intercession of this Saint it was restored and settled in the right place agayne, entiere, sound, and more beautifull then the other.

A woman hauing her sonne so grieuously sicke, that she almost despayred of his recouery, came vnto this holy body, and earnestly commended to the Virgin, her sonne: her prayers were heard & the sorrowfull mother returning home found her sonne in health.

A child for six yeares together was sicke, and his legges, and thighes being putrifyed and full of rottenesse, he washed himselfe with great confidence in the water which had touched

this

this holy Body, and his desire was accomplished, he being perfectly cured.

A woman was so torméted for the space of three yeares with excessiue payne in her head, that she seemed to be tormented by the Diuell: she could get no rest, and all the remedyes which she had procured did nothing auayle. Her domestical frends hauing tryed al meanes in vayne, infine made recourse vnto this Virgin, vowing vnto her an image of waxe, and a hart of siluer, and their prayers were not in vayne.

Another had a most dangerous sore vpō one of her fingers which put her to intollerable payne, she vowed a finger of siluer, & bound her finger with a cloath of this

holy Virgin, and a little after she found her soare with the rootes therof fastned to the cloath wherwith she had bound her finger, it being presently cured.

One had one part of his Body so lame, that he could not stir it, yet was it very sensible and full of payn: he called vpō our holy Virgin for help, and anointed it with the sacred liquour of her Body, & and recouered his former health.

A person of threescore yeares old, whose bowells came forth of his Body through a Rupture, was cured by touching the Reliques of this Virgin: and of this malady many, but especially children were cured in the same sort.

A yoūg youth who had one of the sides of his body all blasted,

and

and his legge full of vlcers had the the like help.

Our holy Virgin being inuocated by another who fell downe from a high place, she preserued him from harme.

In like sort one was cured who after a grieuous and long sicknes was fallen into a palsy.

A young mayd was cured being touched with the same Reliques who was troubled with a great soarnes in her throate so that she could neyther swallow nor speake.

A child that lay stretched out on a bed for dead, so soone as he was touched with these Reliques vomited three horrible worms, & recouered his health.

Another, who was depriued

this life reuiued by being touched with the ſame Reliques.

In the ſame ſort another womã was cured of a grieuous paine which ſhe felt in her ſhoulder and arme, ſo that ſhe could not lift it vp.

A Captayne ſicke of a burning Feuer, in great danger of his life, auoided imminent death by the ſame meanes: and many others in lik manner who had both tertian and quartan agues.

A child infected with a very cõtagious diſeaſe, was cured by making a vow to this Saint.

This Saint Catherin inuocated by a woman whoſe arme was out of ioint and in wonderfull payne, aſſiſted her, & ſayd vnto her, Goe and I will teach thee, and at theſe

wordes

wordes the woman was cured.

This holy Virgin appeared vnto the daughter of this woman, ſicke of the plague, and ſayd vnto her, Feare not for thou ſhalt be cured, and preſently ſhe was well.

A Lawier was ſo troubled with a ſoarenes in his throat that it was thought he would dye, but he found the like ſuccour and remedy.

A womā hauing bin two daies in labour, and not being able to be deliuered, ſhe was brought to Bed ſo ſoone as ſhe had bin touched with the Reliques of this holy Virgin.

A noble man was cured in the ſame ſort who was tormēted with a great payne, not only in his Breaſt, but in all his Body.

This holy Virgin being innocated by a young maid, who was tormented with a moſt grieuous and intollerable paine, appeared vnto her, praying vpon her knees vnto God for her, the which ſhe ſeeing, ſaid vnto all that were preſent, Fall all on your knees; do you not ſee Saint Catharin praying vnto God for me? and at that very inſtant all her paine ceaſed.

A Charter-houſe monke two whole years troubled with a grieuous ſicknes, no medecins being able to help him, by the ayde of this Virgin was preſently cured.

A young Child playing had his eye put out by his cõpanio with a ſtaffe, & wholy forth of the place: his ſorrowfull mother implored the aſſiſtãce of the holy Virgin, & vowed

vowed a head of ſiluer for her ſonne: the eye being ſet in the due place by the ſurgeon ſtrayght faſtned and entred ſo well, as if it had neuer bin put forth.

A noble woman that oftentimes a day was troubled with the falling ſicknes, comming vnto the body of the holy Virgin, and offering there a Candle or torch, that ſicknes wholy left her: of the which alſo her foure childrē were cured.

A young maid had the plague, which was already broken forth vnder her arme, and on her right thigh: ſhe ſaw in her ſleepe Saint Catharine ſtanding by her whom ſhe inuocated, & found her help.

A virgin of the ſame Monaſtery who for two yeares togeather was

troubled with a great paine in her Breast, and vexed with a grieuous cough, euery one thinking she would fall into a consumption, on the night that Saint Catharin was take vp, anoynted her Breast with her holy liquour: afterwards in her sleep she saw how she prayed vnto God for her, during the time of which prayer the sicke person felt such a sweet and fragrant perfume, that not able to support it, she felt her selfe, as she thought interiourly and exteriourly to melt, and to be rapt in spirit after an admirable manner, crying out in her sleepe Iesus, Iesus, & feeling her selfe to faint through the smell of that diuine odour, and forthwith awaking found herselfe wholly cured of her old infirmity.

That

That which followeth is no leſſe worthy of memory. A Virgin of the monaſtery of Corpus Chriſti at Ferrara, hauing one of her knees out of ioint which put her to vehement payne, implored by vrgent and earneſt prayers the ſuccour of Saint Catherine. That very night ſleeping, ſhe thought herſelfe to be in a moſt beautiful pallace & to behould an infinite number of moſt beautifull young children adorning a Queene. One of them turning herſelfe to the reſt ſayd, how durſt this perſon enter in hither? another anſwered, it is likely ſhe did not come hither preſumptuouſly or without order: ſhe then ſtanding a far of ſaw the Queene cloathed with a white garment,

and

and a mantle ouer it of admirable beauty, and ſplendour, in faſhion like vnto the Copes which Prieſts weare when they celebrate ſollemnly. She was ſeated in a moſt beautifull Throne, her head adorned with three Crownes, the one neuertheles ſurpaſſing the other in beauty and price; ſhe vnderſtood that this Queene was S. Catharine of Bologna, and began to pray that ſhe would vouchſafe to aſſiſt her: the holy Virgin made a ſigne with her hand, that ſhe ſhould come vnto her; but ſhe bathfull and fearefull by reaſon of ſo great a maieſty, durſt not approach. The Queene calling her againe, ſhe came towardes her, & being neere vnto her, not able to ſupport the fragrancy of her ſweet

odours

odours began euen to faint. Saint Catharine turning her selfe to a sacred Virgin that stood by her side cloathed with beautifull garments of purple but of darke colour, vvith other ornaments also very rich and glorious, but of lesse beauty then Saint Catharines, sayd vnto her: I haue pitty on this poore sicke person, and I will help her. That spoken she rose frō her seate, making the sicke Virgin a signe to stay a little, towards whome approaching she lifted vp with her right hand her garment which trayned on the ground, and vncouered her foote which was whiter then snow, and on the vpper part thereof shined a circle of gold. Then she cast a wōderfull mild looke, a most sweet and

and gratious countenance vpon the ſicke perſon, and turning towardes her, ſhe bleſſed her. She forthwith awaked and felt manifeſtly the bone of her knee to be ſet in the right place, yet not without extreme paine, ſo that ſhe was conſtrayned to cry out Ieſus, Ieſus. She aroſe from her bed not yet able to walke firmely, but after that ſhe had agayne cauſed her knee to be touched with the Reliques of this Saint, ſhe recouered her former ſtrength and ſolidity.

I will recoũt another not much vnlike vnto this. Another Virgin of the ſame monaſtery had for the ſpace of twelue yeares a vaine broken in her Breaſt, from the which many tymes ſhe caſt great abondance of bloud, ſo that they thought

thought she could not liue. One day being surprised with a sweet and light sleep, there appeared vnto her a woman of rare & wonderfull beauty, her garments of purple and silke, interlaced with gold and siluer, that gaue a wonderfull grace and luster thereto, and augmented their price, togeather with pearls like white lillyes, pretious stones, and a great number of most beautifull flowres, her head was embellished and graced with siluered hayres, adorned with little flowres and pretious stones: she had a Crowne on her head in brightnes and splendour equall with the sunne, of a florishing age, about thirty three years old, and by her side stood a young man, in age and beauty compa-

rable with her. She enquired of the ſicke Virgin how ſhe felt her ſelfe? Wel (ſaid ſhe) ſince ſo is the will of God, but according to humane ſenſe I am grieuouſly tormented. The other replyed, I will make you ſee how grieuous your malady is, & ſtrayght ſhe tooke a little knife & ſeemed to open her Breſt in the middeſt. The ſicke Virgin looking in, ſaw in her breaſt, a rift, and a great vlcer full of corrupted bloud which ſeemed to boyle. Then this vvoman ſayd vnto her, be of good courage and hope that Saint Catharin of Bologna will help thee: this ſpoken ſhe diſappeared, and the ſicke perſon awaking found her ſelfe much better. One night after a little before day returning

to her chamber, her doore being open, she felt a most admirable sweet and fragrant smell, at which amazed she cryed a loud Iesus, yet (feeling in her hart, as if some body had sayd interiourly vnto her, doubt not but that by the merits of this holy Virgin thou shall be perfectly cured) filled with fayth, and hope, she demanded to be signed with her Reliques, and that done she presently recouered her health, nor did she euer after spit bloud. Some dayes being past she fell into a feare and apprehension, whether that which she had seene were not some diabolical illusion, finding her selfe vnworthy of so great a benefit: one night as she intended to say the Rosary of the glorious Virgin as many Christi-

ans are accuſtomed to doe, falling a ſleepe, the woman that had appeared vnto her before ſo glorioufly adorned, came vnto her agayne accompanyed with the ſame young man, beholding her with a mild looke & ſweet countenance, rebuked her ſaying, O woman of little fayth, come with me, and doubt not. And taking her by the hand ſhe led her into a pleaſant meadow, the admirable beauty whereof is not to be explicated: that little which the Virgin was able to recount thereof we will ſet downe. The ground of the meadow was of pure gold, mingled and beſet with all kind of pretious ſtones. The colours which appeared moſt, were a darke purple, a glittering white,

a

liuely greene, a sky colour, and many other. A sweet gale of wind did produce herbes and flowres euery where in the meadow, that rauished with their sweetnes & beauty both the sent and sight of all that beheld them. On the right side therof many young youthes stood in a longe rowe of rare and admirable beauty, cloathed in rich garments of purple and silke, with gold & siluer lace, beset with pearles, and all kind of fayre pretious stones. In their right hands they held euery one a Crosse litle in quantity, but very bright and glittering, hauing about their necks chaynes of gold cunningly wrought & enameled with singular industry, and moreouer euery part of their body be-

ing ſeuerally embelliſhed with rich and ineſtimable Iewells. In the middeſt of this ranke of youths a King was ſeene far more Illuſtrious & ſumptuouſly adorned then the reſt were, frō whoſe Body to wit from his handes, feet, & ſide, proceeded fiue bright ſhining ſtarrs, whoſe radiant beams admirable for their ſplendour, did blaze on all that long ranke. To aſcend to the throne of this King ſtayrs & ſtepps of pretious ſtones firme, ſolid, poliſhed and wrought with wonderfull art were in the midſt of the meadow, vpon which ſtood an infinit number of children, whoſe garments were little coates of darke purple colour, and ouer them white garments. On their Breaſt ech of them had a little

little lambe, of gold, rarely and induſtriouſly carued: their necks were adorned with little chaynes (as their age did require) of pure gold: in their right hand they held euery one a palme-tree enriched with lillyes, and red Roſes, and in their other a muſicall inſtrument on which they did melodiouſly ſing:

Gloria, Laus, & Honor tibi ſit Rex Chriſte Redemptor;
Cui puerile decus prõpſit Oſanna piũ.

This harmony was of ſuch ſweetnes as no perſon is able to comprehend, much leſſe expreſſe it, ſo that ſhe that was preſẽt therat, ſayd that all the ioyes & humã delights cõpared to this melody wold appeare no other then mourning & lamentation: ſhe added that ſhe

ſhould haue thought her ſelfe moſt happy, if ſhe might haue bin perpetually with one of thoſe children: and full of admiration turning her ſelfe to the Queene that lead her into that meadow ſaid: O generous and noble Queene, bleſſed & worthy Princeſſe, is not this peraduēture the pallace or Court of the King of France, or rather of King Aſſuerus, of which I haue hard ſo great wōders? Wherunto ſhe anſwered vvith mild and gracious vvordes: This is not the Court of any mortall King: theſe children vvhoſe harmony you ſo much admire, are the Innocents vvho for little Ieſus ſhed their bloud. The King is our Patriarke S. Francis: this long rovv of Noble knights, his Religious the Fr. Minors

nors that followed his ſtepps: the pretious garments which you ſee thē to haue, are giuē thē in reward of that groſſe abiect habit which they wore in their life tyme. They hold a Croſſe, becauſe carrying their Croſſes they did imitate Ieſus their King and mayſter: the fiue ſhining ſtarrs which you ſee proceed frō the hands, feete & ſide of our glorious Patriarke, are the markes of thoſe woundes which he had printed in his Body. When ſhe had ſayd theſe thinges ſhe withdrew her ſelfe a little, & ſtrayght flying as a bird ſhe returned moſt ſwiftly agayne, bringing with her two other young Virgins moſt beautifull, and magnificently adorned, that one would haue taken them to be

Queenes. One of them held in her hand a box vncouered ful of moſt fragrant and ſweet ointments: the other carryed the couer thereof. The Queene comming neer vnto the ſicke perſon, and the two with her, dipping the end of her little finger in the box, anoynted her Breaſte ſaying: Put now your whole truſt in God, and belieue that by the merits of Catharine of Bologna you ſhall ſpit bloud no more: which ſhe hearing gaue thankes in moſt humble manner thinking that it was eyther the glorious Virgin mother of God, orſome holy Cittizen of heauen, & with great feare and reuerence ſayd, O glorious and venerable Lady, let it not be offenſiue vnto you, that I am bold to requeſt you

to declare vnto me your name: she with a smiling and mild countenance answered, I am that little dogge whome the Blessed Spirits in the heauenly Countrey call Catharin: this young man that accōpanyeth me, is your Father Saint Bernardin, one of these two Ladyes whom you see so beauteous is S. Catharin the martyr, and the other Saint Domitilla whose name you beare. Hauing sayd this the three Blessed Virgins imbraced each other with wonderfull ioy & exultation, & the sicke Virgin that beheld this diuine spectacle awaked, & euery day felt her selfe better and better, and quickly recouered her perfect health.

A noble & rich Cittizen of Ferrara hauing a sute in law of great impor-

importance, not knowing where to find certayne papers concerning that ſute, fell into great anguiſh and affliction, but he remembring Saint Catharin of Bologna, conceaued hope that ſhe would help him, neyther was he deceaued: for hauing inuocated her, ſhe reuealed vnto him that his writings were at Venice, & who had them, ſo that going thither and recouering them he gained his ſute.

Another noble man of Ferrara tormented with terrible payne in his ſtomake, could not find any poſſible remedy, ſo that it was thought he would ſhortly dye: Vowing a Breaſt of ſiluer to our holy Virgin, immediatly he found the effect of her aſſiſtance.

A

A child of six mōths old had bin dead for the space of eight houres, the Father implored the help of Saint Catharin, vowing an Image of wax for his Sonne; The child reuiued presently, and being carryed to the sacred Body of this glorious Virgin, and layd in her lappe, he shewed great exultation and signes of ioy, as if he wold haue giuen her thankes, & when he was of age to speake, he neuer ceased begging of his Father to lead him often to see & adore the Virgin.

A young mayd bewitched through enuy, daily pined & was euen consumed away. Being now neere vnto deaths doore her sorrowful mother recommended her vnto Saint Catharine, and within

a while she recouered her former health, and strength, to the great ioy and admiration of euery one.

A noble Matrone for a long time togeather was troubled with a malady called the Emmerods in a more then ordinary māner. For her body was almoſt in all parts corrupted with strāge impoſtums, ſo ſwolne and hard that ſhe had not at all the eaſe of nature, that euery one diſpaired of her life. This woman being no longer able to endure ſuch cruell infirmityes, implored the ayde of our Virgin, and (a thing moſt admirable,) ſcarſe had ſhe finiſhed her vow & prayer, but ſhe was cured.

Another woman that had loſt her Sonne, out of griefe loſt her wits alſo, and remayned in that pitifull

pitty full estate three whole years. So soone as her parents by prayer recommended her vnto Saint Catharin, her vnderstanding was restored vnto her.

What shall I say more? truly I should neuer make an end, if I would relate all the thinges by which almighty God hath made this famous Virgin, more famous and celebrious. The miracles already set down being of no small number are sufficient in my opinion to declare her dignity, and what a sublime ranke of glory she possesseth with God. Neyther doe we want dayly new examples more amply to confirme it; amongst which I ought not to passe ouer in silence one which happened in Ianuary last. A venerable

rable Father of the Order of the Friars Minors, named Father *Thomas Coccus of Imola*, at this present Confessarius of the Virgins of the Monastery of *Corpus Christi* at Bologna, was tormented with a Colicke, which put him for many dayes to most grieuous and violent paines, continuing sometymes for the space of two and twenty houres, without respit; & what remedyes soeuer he vsed agaynst it did auayle him nothing. One of the Religious of the monastery by diuine instinct was moued to thinke that a scapulare of our holy Virgin, which vnto this present day is kept as a holy Relique, might perchance help him. It was presetly layd vpon the place of his payne, and it had such

force

force that the venerable man hauing tryed and felt that Celestiall ayde, doth confesse that he cannot find words to expresse how suddainly the payne at the touch of that sacred Scapulare vanished away. To be briefe let it be sayd to the glory of this Virgin, in respect of her miracles that neuer any man made recourse vnto her in such sort as he ought, whose prayers were vayne, so ready and prompt hath she euer shewed herselfe to assist those that deuoutly implore her fauourable assistance. The greatnes & multitude of her miracles giuing ample & euident testimony of what I haue said, the things themselues neding no longer discourse or further proofe, I heere make an end.

Heere

Heere end the Miracles of the Glorious Virgin S. Catharine of Bologna.

THE

THE ADMIRABLE INSTRVCTIONS OF S. CATHARINE OF BOLOGNA,

Which she gaue vnto her Sacred Virgins, composed by her selfe, and left written in her owne hand.

IBeseech in all Reuerence & Humility, by the deare loue of Christ Iesus, that into whose

handes soeuer this Worke shall come (by the help of God, composed by me poore little dogge, yolping vnder the table of the most excellent, and most deare handmayds and espouses of Iesus the Immaculate lambe in the monastery of *Corpus Christi*, in the Citty of *Ferrara*,) that they beware not to giue credit to these writings, nor to accuse me of arrogancy or pride, and that this little Booke giue them no occasion of errour.

This booke I haue written with my owne hand, for no other cause, then out of feare to deserue reprehension at Gods handes, if I should conceale that which might profit others. I am not ignorant, (as it is manifest in holy writ) that all

all men ought to praise their creatour, manifesting vnto others the course of his diuine prouidence which they haue proued in themselues; wherby the infinite charity of our Lord is made apparant, vouchsafing dayly, of his diuine clemency, to conserue & preserue from infinit and continuall dangers man whom he hath created, seing that this knowledge doth greatly augment and increase our fayth towardes our Creatour.

Wherfore hauing inuocated the Eternall Father, and Iesus Christ his only Sonne, the brightnes and splendour of euerlasting glory, out of loue towardes him, with my hart full of ioy I cry to his seruants, I call on his beloued espouses & say vnto them, Let e-

uery ſoule that loueth God come to the celeſtiall daunce of diuine loue, ſinging for ioy, inflamed with deſire of ōly him that created her, that drew her out of the perilous gulfe of the world, that placed her in the moſt noble Cloiſter of holy Religion, to the end that purified from all ſpot, and ruſt of ſinne, ſhe may put on the ornamēts of ſanctity, attired in the glorious array of vertues, that ſhe may repayre the loſt beauty of her ſoule, returning to the ſtate of originall innocency, that this pilgrimage of mortality being iuſtly and meritoriouſly achieued, ſhe may enter into the bed-chamber of Ieſus Chriſt, her virginall and chaſt ſpouſe, from whoſe hand ſhe is to receaue the guerdō of triumphant

phant glory, prepared for those who renouncing the vayne pleasures of this transitory world, submit themselues to the gouernment and Rule of reason, who leauing their owne will and iudgment runne vnto the secure baué of holy Religion, who yielding to be gouerned wholy by the will of another, march by the way of holy mortifying in all thinges their owne desires.

But because none can runne out this glorious race of perfection, but such as conquer with great violence themselues; I will set downe certayne precepts for the sollace and comfort of them that are entred into this most excellent combat. For many when they feele themselues roughly as-

faulted & battered by their owne will, or by thoughts arising from selfe iudgment, afflict themselues aboue measure, thinking that these things cause them to loose the Reward and Merit of Obedience, which is not so. For euery vertue is perfected by feeling and conquering the contrary vice, as shall appeare in the progresse of this worke, to wit, when we shal speak of the most excellent and most noble vertue of Obedience, called the Royall and most worthy Empresse.

Wherfore she that desires after this perigrination with al secusity to attayne vnto the desired Countrey, let her choose this vertue, and the noblest, beautifullest, and the sweetest comfort

and

and guide that possibly can be found. For this is a strong & impenetrable Target, by which we gayne entire victory ouer our enemyes: this the shippe that conueyeth vs into the hauen of Saluation, where eternall retribution is giuen, according to that which Iesus Christ sayth, *He that followeth me, walketh not in darknes, but shall haue the light of life*. Now seing that euen from the beginning of this enterprise to the end, we are to sayle through a tempestious Sea, and therein vndergoe many grieuous & sharp encounters, I will make prouision of darts and arrowes wherwith we may lawfully fight: which also shall be directions to escape the ambushes of our enemyes. And

this do you neuer forget, that whosoeuer vndertaketh this Cō-bat must not at any time lay aside his weapons, knowing that he fights agaynst enemyes that neuer sleepe, and that doe nothing but watch for aduantage agaynst vs. Go too then, let vs march on with great feruour of spirit, let vs with confidence, and courage vndaunted take into our handes these weapons to the prayse of Iesus Christ.

Wherfore whosoeuer hath so noble, so braue, so excellent a resolution of minde as to imbrace the Crosse for Iesus our Redeemer his loue, slaine in the field of the battaile to redeeme vs frō death, he must first prouide himselfe of necessary weapons for this

Combat,

Combat, and principally of those which we will heere set downe in order. The first arrow shall be Diligence: the second, Diffidence in our selues: the third Confidence in God: the fourth Memory of our Sauiours Passion: the fift, Mindfulnes of our owne death: the sixt, Remẽbrance of the glory of God: the seauenth & last, the Authority of the sacred Scripture, wherwith to fight our Lord himselfe gaue vs an example in the desert.

The soule which is adorned with the imperiall King of *Good will*, that is to say with diuin loue, desiring to serue God in spirit of truth, ought before all thinges to cleere her conscience by a pure & entire confessiõ of al her sins, firmly purposing neuer to fall agayne

into mortall sin, yea rather to dye a thousand tymes, if it were possible: for he that is defiled with mortall sinne, is a member of the diuell, and not Iesus Christ: he is depriued of (a) all the goods of our holy mother the Church, cā do nothing which may auayle him to eternall life. Therfore if any will faithfully serue God, a firme purpose neuer more to fall into sinne, is requisite for thē as we haue said: yet this I wold haue you know, that although you be defiled with mortall sinne, you must neuer leaue to hope in the diuine goodnes, or to giue ouer doing of good as much as you

(a) Vnderstand this of all the Churches meanes, besides those that are for the cōuersion of sinners, vvhcrof sinners are partakers, except they be excōmunicate.

are able, that by the means & help of good workes you may come out of that damnable ſtate: ſo that full of this hope in what caſe ſoeuer you be, you alwayes exerciſe good deeds. Moreouer euery ſeruant of Ieſus Chriſt muſt reſolue to walke the way of the Croſſe, ſeing thoſe that wil ſerue God, muſt of neceſſity fight againſt the enemyes of God, in which skirmiſh they cannot but receaue many blowes, that are felt grieuouſly of fleſh and bloud: agaynſt which enemyes that he may fight valiantly, he muſt haue his Quiuer well furnished and prouided of Arrowes, but eſpecially of theſe ſeauen vvhich vve vvill novv declare.

The first Arrow, which is Diligence.

THE 1. arrow ſhalbe Diligẽce, that is to ſay, a care & ſtudy to doe good workes, ſeing the ſacred Scripture hath in horrour and abomination thoſe that are ſloathfull in the diuine ſeruice.

As it is peculiarly proper to the holy Ghoſt to infuſe into vs holy inſpirations: ſo we on our part ought gratefully to entertayne and carefully follow them, putting them in execution reſiſting continually our appetite that alwayes drawes to that which is oposit to the ſpirit. Theſe motions of the inferiour man by true diligence

gence we must conquer, not permiting the time allotted vs of God to passe away without the fruit of good works, it being written, that he that *wil ascend, ought never cease*, exercising his thoughts dayly in God, directing all his wordes, and actions vnto him, (which is to be vnderstood with measure, & moderatiõ) that so we may be stil prouided for our treacherous & crafty enemy, who coming behind inuades vs. For then he setts vpon vs at vnawares, when vnder pretence of good he seeketh to murder vs, sith as by doing too little, so euen by doing too much we incurre danger.

This is the cause that I sayd we must vse a meane, and moderation, the vertue of discretion being

being that which doth season, and make perfect all other vertues, as Saint Antony the great Doctor of the ancient Fathers affirmes; for our aduersary when he sees that he cannot diuert the seruant of God from doing good workes, he endeauoureth to bring him to do thinges with excesse. So let all our actes of vertue, aswell spirituall as corporall be exercised with discretion, to the end that to the prayse of Iesus Christ, and for our owne saluation we may vse the first arrow of diligēce, doing good workes with due measure.

The second Arrow, which is Diffidence in our selues.

THE second shaft is diffidence in our selues, that is to say, to belieue firmely without any doubt that we cannot of our own forces doe any good; according to that which Iesus christ saith in his Ghospell, *without me you can doe nothing*, much lesse can we resist the infernall powers by reason of their great craft and subtilty, that so no person confide in his owne wisdome. For if he doe, let him be assured without all doubt that by the iust iudgment of God he will worke his owne ouerthrow and destruction, our aduersaryes being

being more cunning and crafty then we. Therefore the second arrow we must vse in this combat is not to trust in our owne forces: and blessed is he that shall be indued with this noble Vertue. And by how much the seruants of God are exalted higher in dignity and prelacy ouer others, by so much is this vertue more requisit and necessary for them.

A certayne vertuous and auncient Religious man, of very rare and commendable life, Superiour of a certayne monastery, affirmed vnto me, that if in the administration of his Office he did any thing without asking first the aduise & counsell of his Religious, (following his owne fancy and opinion) that he alwayes gayned trouble

trouble and anxiety by the bargayne through vnlucky euents: whereas contrary wise consulting the matter with them, that which the greateſt and ſoundeſt part did approue, had alwayes happy ſucceſſe to his great comfort and conſolation: how vnfitting then is it that a Virgin ſubiect to another, and newly entred into the monaſtery preſume to liue according to her owne fancy and fooliſh feruour? How neceſſary is it that ſhe accompliſh all her dutyes and obligations by following the counſell of her Superiour, and Miſtreſſe, to the end that the vertue of meeknes may ſhine in her, and that to the prayſe of Ieſus Chriſt, and for her owne ſaluation, the ſhaft of ſelfe diſtruſt may be vſed by her.

The third Arrow, which is Confidence in God.

THE 3. arrow is Confidence in God, for his loue not fearing any thing, but vndertaking with vehemēt feruor of spirit courageiously the combat against world, the diuel, & our own fleth, which was giuen vs to ferue our spirit: let vs then trample vnder the feete of our affection all these aduersaryes, confiding in God, & without wauering hope that he will abundantly and plentifully minister his grace vnto vs, by which we may carry away the victory ouer all our enemyes, sith we are not ignorant that he neuer forsaketh those that trust in him.

And

And although the seruant and spouse of Iesus sometymes feele (God so permitting it) grieuous tempests and dangerous stormes, in such sort that with her hart lifted vp to heauen she is compelled to cry, my God, my God, forsake me not; euen then when she feareth most to be forsaken, is she in the presence of God, aduanced to high and eminent perfection.

Hereof we haue an example in the only Sonne of God, who drawing to the end of his most bitter passion, called on his Father, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*, yet is it most cleare and manifest that he at that very instant victoriously did triumph with soueraygne perfection, his principall end being alwayes to per-

forme the commandment he had receaued of his Father, to whome he was moſt truely and perfectly vnited and conioyned, euen then when as a paſſible and mortall man he ſayd, My God, my God why haſt thou forſaken me? but this dereliction was, that the Diuinity inſeparably conioyned vnto him, had left the ſenſitiue and humane part to the proper nature therof, rigour of iuſtice requiring that the delectation in diſobedience of our firſt parents, enioyed, ſhould be aboliſhed by the full & complete moſt paynfull Obedience of Ieſus Chriſt.

So now to returne to my purpoſe, let not the ſeruant of Ieſus thinke herſelfe forſaken, although ſomeymes it do ſo ſeeme vnto her,

her, knowing that our God and eternall Father will not haue that befall her, which he would not suffer in his owne sonne, yea the more that she is afflicted with griefes, the more let her fortify her selfe in confidence of the Diuine assistance, calling to mind the sweet promise which our Lord hath made to a distressed soule by the mouth of his Prophet: *I am with him in tribulation, I will deliuer him and glorify him*; who then would shunne tribulation and affliction, wherin we haue for our louing & faithful cõpanion him who is able and bound by his promise to assist in the title of aduersity those that are faythfull vnto him. O how heartly and feruently ought we for this cause desire rather sorrow

then ioy, and in this combat to ground our hope on God, to the end that this third shaft of Confidence, may also be exercised by vs for our owne saluation, and to the prayse of Iesus Christ.

The fourth Arrow, which is The remembrance of the Passiō of our B. Sauiour.

THE fourth Arrow is to remember the perigrination of the glorious & imaculate lābe Christ Iesus, principally his most sacred death and Passion, alwayes setting before the eyes of our vnderstanding, the amiable presence of his most Chast and Virginall humanity. For this is a remedy which helpeth much to the gayning

ning of the victory in euery cõbat, and without which we can neuer vanquish all other arrowes and darts, being of little worth without this. O most glorious passion thou art the remedy of all our wounds, thou the faithfull mother which dost lead thy Children to the celestiall inheritance, thou the most comfortable and assured refuge in all aduersity, thou the nurse who dost cherish to strengthen weake spirits vnto the attayning of soueraygne perfection, thou the cleere glasse which doest illuminate all that behold thee, & reforme that which is deformed in them.

O shield impenetrable that do'st defend all that sit vnder thy protection! O delicious Manna

repleniſhed withal celeſtial ſweetnes preſeruing thē that loue thee from mortall poyſon! O moſt high ladder that doſt rayſe vp to the poſſeſſion of infinite riches thoſe that flying from ſinne clime by thee! O true harbour of comfort for generous Soules! Oh vnexhauſted fountain ſatiating thoſe that thirſt and burne with deſire of thee! O ſea full of pretious gemmes, yielding ſecure paſſage to thoſe that direct their Oares towardes thee! O ſweet Oliue-tree extending thy branches ouer the whole world! O ſweet ſpouſe of the ſoule inflamed with thy loue, whoſe heart thou doſt ſolely poſſeſſe without any corriuall!

Oh then my beloued and deereſt Siſters, whome I affect from th

the bottome of my ſoule, exerciſe your ſelues inceſſantly in this holy life and death: Fix your ſight in the radiāt ſplendour of the beauty thereof, to conſerue thereby the ſplendour and beauty of your mindes. Truly the ſacred Paſſion is the moſt skilful miſtreſſe which will guide you I ſay, that are yet young, you my beloued Virgins, to the beauty and perfection of all vertues, and by it to ſaluation, that to the prayſe of Ieſus Chriſt, you may obtayne the reward of your victories.

The fifth Arrow, which is The remembrance of our owne death.

THE fift Arrow is the remembrance of our owne death, it being most certayne that we must all dye. The tyme of this life is called the tyme of mercy, wherin God doth daily expect that we amend our liues, which if we neglect, we must render a strict account not only of the euill committed, but also of the good which haue negligently omitted: so that we should remember Saint Paules short exhortation and lesson, *whilst we haue tyme let vs doe good*. For this reason it is most profitable eftsoones to remember

member the houre of our death, and alwayes to be prepared agaynst that last agony, seing we know not the day nor the houre wherin the rigorous Iudge shall sumon vs to appeare before him, to render account of the tallent of good Will giuen vs to negotiate with, to the prayse of our maker the saluation of our soules, and the good of our neighbour.

Notwithstanding I say let the young Virgins beware of too much confidence in themselues, not daring to violate the Rules their Superiours and Mistresses prescribe, but rather apply their whole study to walke that way which hath byn shewed them, for the gouernment both of Body & Soule: I say this, because our aduersary

uersary being crafty, sometymes doth besot the spirits of the ignorant with such feare and suspicion that they beleiue they shall dye within a short while, persuading them that they shall depart very poore of spirituall treasures, except they doe chastice and treate their bodyes in a more rigorous manner.

By this meanes he insisteth that he may presse them to passe the limits of true obedience, which without doubt is more pretious & of greater merit then any corporall chasticement of what sort soeuer. It is therefore very requisit to vse with much prudence and discretion the dart of the remembrance of death, to the end we may exercise our selues therin, to

the

the ſaluation of our ſoules, and to the prayſe of Ieſus Chriſt.

The ſixt Arrow, which is To remember the glory of God.

THE ſixt is the remembrance of the glory of God prepared and promiſed vnto thoſe that haue renounced the world and the delights of this life, that haue lawfully fought out euen vnto death a good combat. For ſeeing (as the glorious and moſt ſacred Doctour Saint Auguſtine ſayth) it is impoſſible for a perſon to enioy the pleaſures both of this life and the next, reiect willingly my beloued Siſters the delights of this world: let not the labour in renouncing your owne wills ſeeme great

great and grieuous vnto you, calling to mind that which our Blessed Patriark Saint Francis was accustomed to say, That the greatest & most excellent gift which God could in this life bestow vpon mā was, That his seruant renouncing his owne wil, could & would ouercome himselfe.

Moreouer that the eternall happynes is so comprehensibly great, that he desired all payne might be pleasant to him, so to declare the greatnes of glory by suffering all paynes ioyfully in the remembrance thereof. In confirmation of the greatnesse of the ioyes prepared for vs my beloued Sisters, I will set downe heere an exāple. A little after I had entred into this monastery, a certayne young

young mayd entred also, who after a short tyme began to be weary of her state, repenting her selfe that she had forsaken the world, & the allurements thereof.

Being troubled with these thoughts, on a tyme she came to a seruant of God of very approoued life, to confesse her sinnes, and discouered vnto him the desire she had of returning to the world: wherunto he with great astonishment answered, Cõsider wel what you intend to doe (my daughter) for as I perceaue you are she whõ I saw the last night in my sleepe, with great admiration, not knowing then you were the woman, nor the significatiõ of my dream: wherunto she somewhat appaled replyed.

Relate

Relate vnto me I beseech you your dreame. I was (sayd he) lead vnto a sollemne feast where an infinite number of young Virgins were present, of wonderfull beauty and splendour, euen more bright then the Sunne, inuironed with admirable glory, their heads being adorned with garlandes of diuers fayre & excellent flowres. In this sort gloriously set out they went to meete a young Virgin who shewed desire to be admitted into their company, and with great ioy and triumph they went to receaue her. She being now in their company, made some signe that she repented, & indeed changing her mind returned backe, wherat that most noble assembly full of sorrow disappeared.

I

I awaked musing with my selfe, what this vision might signify, but now I plainly see that God by your cōming vnto me hath explicated the same: Wherfore, I beseech you, my daughter, doe not follow this suggestion of the enemy, but rather constantly persevere, that hereafter in the most noble feast and company which I haue seene, of holy Virgins, you may enioy euerlasting repose. The Virgin with this speach wholy cōfounded resolued to stay, yet a little after not behauing her selfe well, very Religiously was she restored to her parēts, where she liued not long, and so the successe of the matter, shewed the vision of the seruant of God to be true. For hauing lost the Crown of Virginity,

she was iustly depriued of all meanes to ariue vnto that most chast and Virginall feast, which that seruant of God had seene.

Wherfore beloued Sisters perseuere couragiously, continue cõfidently in good, moued with no other motiue then only the loue of your Lord and God. Put your whole trust and confidence in the euerlasting felicity, to the end you may one day attayne therunto, saying those wordes with which our seraphicall Father Saint Francis spent his last breath. *The iust expect me vntill I receaue my reward from thee*, to the prayse of Iesus Christ. Amen.

The

The seauenth Arrow, which is the Authority of the holy Scripture.

THE seauenth Arrow is the authority of the holy Scripture, wherof I must discourse more at large, and that to discouer a most subtill fraud which our auncient enemy vsed towards one of our young Sisters: This being also the principall cause that incited me to write this little Booke.

For I desire the same may serue for a guide and instruction to all young Virgins at this present in this monastery, and heerafter to come, whose saluation I haue alwayes loued; and also for others

who want not experience. Indeed through the continuall, frequent, and daily paynes which I haue taken to implore the diuin assistãce, I find my body to be greatly destitute of naturall forces, so that I cannot finish this worke without so great difficulty, as will not only weaken my handes, but also my head and all other parts of my Body: but I am not vnwilling quickly to finish & consumate for the loue of Iesus this mortall pilgrimage, and to conclude the continuall combat of this life replenished with innumerable labours.

The seauenth dart then by which we must vanquish our enemyes, is the memory of the holy Scripture, which we ought alwais carry imprinted in our hart, taking

king counsell of her as of a faythfull mother, in all occasions; which we reade to haue bin the laudable custome of Saint Cicily Virgin, of whome it is written that she alwayes carryed hidden in her bosome the Ghospel of Iesus Christ. With this dart our Sauiour did put backe and confound the Diuell in the desert, when he sayd, *It is written, man liueth not of Bread only, but of euery word which proceedeth from the mouth of God.*

Wherfore my beloued Sisters, permit not the dayly lectures to passe in vayne, nor that which is read in the quire, or at the table, to be lost. Thinke that the Ghospels and Epistles which you heere dayly in the sacrifice of the holy masse are letters and tokens sent vnto

you from your heauenly spouse, lay them vp in your bosome, and as often as you can possibly meditate vpon them, principally whē you are retired alone in your Chābers, to the end that you may with greater content sweetly and chastly imbrace him who hath sent them to you. If you do this, new ioyes will dayly ouerflow you, hearing so often from him who loueth you so soueraignly. O how sweet and pleasant is the diuine word of Iesus to the soule inflamed with his loue? Is not the Euangelicall doctrine a sweet milky streame from the diuine mouth of Iesus Christ? It is truly. With what attention then ought you to heare and receaue it.

Now I will conclude my discourse

course of the forsayd shafts, requesting one thing of you beloued Sisters, that is, that you will vse thē discreetly, hauing them continually with you, that you may with greater facility gayne the victory ouer your enemyes; that you may diligently preserue your selfes frō being deceaued vnder the colour of good. For oftentimes our aduersary doth shew himselfe to vs, vnder the forme of Iesus Christ, or the glorious Virgin, or of an Angel, or of some Saint: when any such thing appeares vnto you, tak presently the weapons of the holy Scripture, which teacheth vs how the glorious Virgin did proceed when the Archangell Gabriell came vnto her. For turning towardes him she pondered with

herselfe, and asked of him what manner of salutation that might be?

You must obserue this Rule, if at any time any thing appeare vnto you, that before you giue eare vnto it, you know whether it be a good or an euill spirit; and blessed are they who shall doe this. It is a thing no lesse necessary to take great heed of our thoughts seeing the diuell sometymes doth stirre vp in vs good and holy desires, to the end that vnder the pretence of vertue he may afterwards deceaue vs; we may the more manifestly know this, in that he afterwardes tempteth and assaulteth vs with the vice contrary to that vertue, which he doth to draw vs into the depth of desperation.

I will manifeſt the verity of this by that which happened to the aforeſaid ſeruant of Ieſus Chriſt, who giueth vnto her ſelfe the name of little Dogge. Shee from her young yeares ẽlightned with diuine grace, and inſpired to ſerue her Creatour, entring into this Monaſtery with great feruour, night and day was very diligent in praier. She endeauoured with all her power to gaine ſuch vertues as ſhe ſaw & heard in others, which ſhe did not incited by any enuy, but to become more pleaſing vnto God in whome ſhe had placed all her loue. And although in ſome time ſhe came to abound with multiplicity of graces and celeſtiall gifts, notwithſtanding afterwards ſhe ſuffered diuers great

tẽptations, in such sort that being one day assaulted with a certayne suggestion, knowing that it was stirred vp in her by the instinct of the diuell, she spake very boldly vnto him, saying: O wicked spirit, know that thou canst not excite in me any infernall temptation which I will not discouer.

Wherfore God intending to breake this too great confidence which she had in herselfe, and to make her know that the enemy was far more crafty then she, permitted him to tempt her by most subtil fraud. Vnder the forme and shape of the Glorious Virgin he appeared and spake vnto her, and said: if doest cast from thee all vicious loue, I will place in thee a most vertuous loue: and that being

ing ſaid vaniſhed out of ſight. She belieued that it was truly the glorious Virgin, beeauſe at that time being in praier ſhe had earneſtly beſought that B. Queene to obtaine for her of our Sauiour, that ſhe might earneſtly and feruently loue him. She beganne to thinke with her ſelfe, why the Virgin ſhould ſay vnto her, that if ſhe would caſt from her all vicious loue, that ſhe would giue her a moſt vertuous loue; and by the ſecret fraud of the enemy it was ſuggeſted vnto her that ſhe ought to caſt far from her her owne will, & iudgement; wherupon ſhe reſolued againe to apply her whole care, and ſtudy to obay her Supeperiour in all thinges without any contradiction or repugnance, as

ſhe

she had alwaies bin accustomed to doe. For at the beginning of her conuersion, although she was not by the band of Religion, obliged therunto, she did notwithstanding loue and desire true and holy Obedience aboue all other vertues, and applied her whole endeauours to the gaining thereof.

This caused her aduersaries alwaies to striue to deceaue her by this vertue, and beganne daily to suggest vnto her sundry troublesome thoughts in such sort that almost all that her Superiour did or said was misconstrued, and to the worst sense interpreted by her with mentall murmurations against her, which caused in her wonderfull affliction and anxiety

xiety of spirit. She did very often & with great shame and confusion confesse these her thoughts to her Superiour, yet for all that the warre of her inward discontents ceased not, though this helped her not a little, principally in that heerby she recouered new forces not to consent therunto. Many times she was in a manner violently drawne to disobey and dislike her Superior, yet hauing the recourse vnto prayer she found some help, so she consented not at all to such thoughts. But after that apparition aforesaid, she thought that the Blessed Virgin was angry against her, and was wonderfully tormented and afflicted in spirit, saying to her selfe. The B. Virgin bad me cast from me my own wil, and

and daily I find the contrary: thus she despaired of herselfe, and was discontēt, being ignorant that this proceeded from the instigation of the enemy, and not from herselfe.

The wicked spirit, seing that all this, did not preuaile to make her loose Hope, inuented a more subtill fraud, and as she entred the Church one morning to make her prayer, appeared vnto her, vnder the forme of Iesus Christ crucified, with his armes displaied abroad before her: he offered himselfe vnto her in a certaine admirable manner, making shew as if he would sweetly imbrace her, & spake in this sort: O Theefe thou hast stolne my hart, restore vnto me that which thou hast taken:

she

she repleniſhed with reuerence and feare (ſo that if ſhe could ſhe would willingly haue hidden her ſelfe vnder the ground,) being verily perſwaded ſhe ſpake vnto Ieſus Chriſt, anſwered: And howv haue I done this O Lord, for I haue nothing, and am moſt poore and reduced into nothing in this world before thee, being ſubiect to the power of another, in ſuch ſort that I poſſeſſe nothing.

He thē replied I wold haue thee to know that thou art not ſo poore as thou ſayeſt thou art, for thou haſt yet ſomthing: for I made thee to my owne image and ſimilitude giuing thee memory, vnderſtanding, and will, which thou by making vnto me a vow of obedience did'ſt truly reſtore backe againe.

but

and many other by which he exhorted her to obedience, he vanished away from her, who believed that is was truly Iesus Christ, remayning very doubtfull and in great suspence often thinking on these things, not finding herselfe in any sort freed from her former combat, but contrary wise loaden & ouercharged with great cares and importunate thoughts. As often as her Superiour did commaund her any thing, or did but speake of any thing, presently an infinite number of iudgements swarmed into her mind, she would say to herselfe, it would be better to doe so, or so, many thoughts of replyes and contradictions busying her vnderstanding, wherof notwithstanding she

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afterwards repented still herselfe, and acknowledged them to her Superiour, and asked pardon, and that with great shame and griefe, in such sort, that sometimes she could through the superabundant effusion of teares haue washed her Superiours feete.

She affirmed that without this remedy of acknowledging her fault, she should oftentimes haue consented to the suggestion, and haue byn rebellious to her superiour. For oftentymes she felt herselfe moqued and excited to contend with her, and to disprooue that which she did, or commanded to be done, the which without doubt would haue byn to her damnation. For it is in no sort lawfull for the Religious to resist their

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but nowv thou doest take it from me: behold for this cause I doe shew vnto thee that thou art a theefe. She thinking that this was spoken in regard of the thoughts of infidelity which had passed in her hart as we haue set downe before, answered: O my Lord what should I doe, sith I haue not my owne hart in my powver, nor can I resist my thoughts but they slip into my mind. he replied. Do as I shall teach thee, take thy memory, vnderstanding & will, & exercise them in nothing but according to the vvill of thy Superiour: she answered, by vvhat meanes? For I cannot vvithhold my vnderstading from discernning, nor my memory from remembring. Submit (sayd he) thy vvill vnto hers,

and

and thinke that her will is thine, exercise thy memory and vnderstanding in nothing but in that which thy Superiour will haue theee. She replyed, that she could not, because her hart was not in her power whereunto he answered, doe as I shall tel thee, sleep, watch, and rest. O Lord (sayd she) I doe not vnderstand the meaning of these wordes. Then expounding them he sayd: I sayd sleep, that is doe not intangle thy selfe in the present affaires of this world. I said watch, to the end thou mayst be alwayes carefull and ready to obay. I sayd rest, to the end that in all thy workes thou alwayes meditate something of my passion.

After he had sayd these thinges

and many other by which he exhorted her to obedience, he vanished away from her, who believed that is was truly Iesus Christ, remayning very doubtfull and in great suspence often thinking on these things, not finding herselfe in any sort freed from her former combat, but contrarywise loaden & overcharged with great cares and importunate thoughts. As often as her Superiour did commande her any thing, or did but speake of any thing, presently an infinite number of indgements swarmed into her mind, she would say to herselfe, it would be better to doe so, or so, many thoughts of replyes and contradictions busying her vnderstanding, wherof notwithstanding she

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superiours, or to contemne their commandements, except they cõmand some matter of mortall sin. Wherfore if any be tempted therunto, let them resist courageously, beleiuing that it proceedeth from the enuy and malice of our ancient enemy, who doth principally hate those that serue God perfectly in the state of obedience, and seeking out dayly new inuentions by which he may intrappe them, which if they resist with patience, they shall haue a crowne of martirdome.

But to returne to my purpose, the Virgins torment and combat dayly increased, though she did not neglect to loue her Superiour, nor to reuerence and obay her, nor was obstinate in her owne

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iudgement, but rather then to cōsent therunto, ready to endure yet greater assaults and fiercer encoūters: Notwithstanding out of deep sorrow of heart, teares flowed aboue all measure, that she thought if God did not assist her quickly she should weep out her eyes. For one day as she wept teares very bitterly, and that humour being spent, bloud began to issue out, with vnspeakable griefe, that wounded and pierced euen her hart; she could not contayne her selfe from weeping, principally seeing that she was depriued of the flame of diuin loue, with which in tymes past she seemed so ardētly to burne that scarsely could she hide it, now she was come to so great drynes and ari-

dity that she could not pray or say her diuine Office without great paine and tediousnes, wherby her sorrow increased, she fearing that this befell her for taking to much delight in herselfe; which feare was also a suggestion of the enemy.

For as we sayd, when he first appeared vnto her, he commanded her to driue from her, all proper loue, and now he tempted her, drawing her into this suspition to thinke that she was intangled and possessed with the loue of her selfe and of her parents and frendes, with very notable increase of her paynes and torments. And these increasing dayly and howerly, she was now almost destitute of vnderstading, being both within

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in & without assaulted; for which cause she began to giue herselfe some more rest, not watching so much in the night as she was accustomed. For she was so addicted to prayer, that euen in her sleepe she would oftentymes rise, and stretch forth her armes in forme of a Crosse: and no doubt but this was a deceipt of the enemy to the end that by praying too much she might runne out of her wits. Moreouer she imagined and in very deed it was so, that, that happened to her which we read to haue happned to holy Iob, to be depriued of all riches both of mind & body, that it seemed wholy impossible for her to exercise any of the vertues which she had before with so great feruour, without any diffi-

culty exercised. Only she retained the exercise of patience, which also, as the other, seemed to be very weake and feeble in her. The least word she hard, did much afflict & molest her, which befell her after the aforesaid fraud of the enemy, by reason of great anxiety of spirit.

After a long tyme seing that he had not yet ouerthrowne her, he took agayne the forme of the glorious Virgin, holding her little Child in her armes, and vpbrayding her said, Thou wouldest not banish from thee vicious loue, therfore I will not giue thee vertuous loue, that is, the loue of my Sonne. This being sayd in anger she vanished: and the Virgin thinking that it was the true mother

of God, was surprised with vehement sorrow, believing that she had highly offended both mother and Sonne. Let those that heare or read this, consider into what anguish and distresse this poore servant of Iesus was reduced, that scarsely could she endure herselfe: she should haue forsaken and abandoned all hope, had she not knowne despayre to be greater then any other sinne. But the diuine goodnes did neuer take frō her a good desire, and this desire was alwayes so constant towards God, that she would not doe any thing that shee thought contrary to his will. The enemy seing that by so many assaults he could not draw her into the state of damnation, by the permission of God,

his rage and fury augmented a-gaynst her. For knowing how much she loued the honour of her monastery, & the common good of all her Sisters, he inuented another meanes to torment her.

One night as all the others did sleep, she heard him with great rage and fury goe roaring about the Monastery, as if he would soone haue ouerthrowe it, but seing God would not permit him, he ceased till all the mooueables, furniture, and houshould stuffe of the Religious was carryed out. In all which occasion she neuer gaue ouer her accustomed constancy, and would not goe out of the house, till those that lead her, had promised to bring her backe agayne so soone as the place should

be

be reedifyed. In this sort with great sorrow she went forth, praying and requesting those that did conduct her to carry her to some place where she might neither see nor speak with any person, which was graunted her. And it pleased the diuine prouidence that within few dayes she with fiue other of her Sisters returned to their former Couent, the same being repared and accommodated in better sort. There passed some time before it could be incloſed, & for this respect those that came to visit the Religious had free accesse, whence our ancient enemy tooke occasion to redouble his attempts agaynst her.

By this instinct and suggestion, some who both for nobility and

riches

riches were of great authority, besought her, and endeauoured to winne her good will to come and liue with their daughter, who liuing in the world intended not to marry. They promised (if it were needfull) they would obtayne her licence of his Holines to doe it, & that they wold prouide her better thē she could desire for all things beloging to the health of her soule and Body. She would in no sort consent, perseuering constantly in her Monastery, with an assured hope that at the last it would be inclosed, and be agayne one day reduced to the Rule and Institute of S. Clare. Our trecherous aduersary did agayne endeauour to ouerthrow the foundation of this new building, which she fearing, with-

withall affection of hart, had recourse to the weapon of prayer, & eleuating her mentall voyce to heauen, implored his diuine assistance; yet before her cryes & clamours were heard, she suffered many, and diuers afflictions of mind, both in her owne person and in some of her neerest frinds; which for breuities sake I will not particulerly specify in this place.

At the last (as it is written) they cryed out in the day of their tribulation, & thou did'st from heauen heare them, so this Virgin had the like happy successe; the building increased, and still doth increase to this present day; the enemy was vanquished in the combat, and confounded, to the glory and honour of God, who neuer

forsa-

forsaketh them that trust in him, although sometymes to try them, he leaue & expose them to a multitude of stormes, that they may learne experience, and be made worthy of the eternity of glory. For he gaue her to vnderstand in the end, that in all the former apparitions related, the cruell had taken the forsayd shapes to deceaue her, and that those things were permitted by God, to bring her to a more deepe and profound knowledge of herselfe, which was the happy periode of all.

For this Infernall combat being ended (which lasted fiue whole yeares) she was agayne diuinely comforted and visited, and filled with so great knowledge of her owne weakenes and nothing,

that

that if all the blessed Spirits in heauen would haue gone about to perswade her the contrary, confirming it by oath, she could not haue beleeued it. Moreouer she began to enter into a most reuerent wholsome feare, that in the presence of the diuine Maiesty she esteemed her selfe nothing, and had so base a conceit of her selfe, that it is not to be comprehended nor expressed. In this sort she learned at her cost, to be more wary in discouering the crafts and subtilties of the enemy, and to know true and diuine visitations from false and counterfayte. For she affirmed afterwards, that when God of his diuine clemency did vouchsafe to visit her interiourly, she did presently feele it, by a true and ineffable

affable token, which was, that in her still the night of profound humility went before the morning of diuine comfort.

An humility so deepe, as it caused her interiourly and exteriourly to incline and bow downe her head, and to thinke that she was the source and spring of all sinnes past, present, and to come, as being the cause of all the sinnes of her neighbours, towards whome she bare true and vehement loue. This loue of her neighbors, springing frō humility, was as the dawning of the day, after which presently Iesus Christ him selfe did follow, the radiant Sunne, the true burning fire, who without any precedent & foregoing meditations with great tranquility peaceable

ceably rested in the deuoted powers of her Soule, that she might truly say; O profound nothing; thou doest worke so strongly and powerfully as to open al the gates, and enter euen into him who is infinit!

Afterwards the flame of this diuine loue by little and little asswaging, her thoughts falling downe to remember this present life, she beganne to feele ardent desires to suffer afflictions; her face was ioyfull, all her senses recreated after an admirable manner: she had sometymes the gift of eloquence, and grace to speake, her vertues were much increased & augmented by a singular graciousnes and sweetnes she had to reprehend & support the faults of others. At

other tymes appeared a quite different effect; for it seemed that at euery word her spirit did ascend vp to heauen, which proceeded from the grace of the diuine loue she alwaies enioyed, which then did spread it selfe, and sinke more deeply into her. And the neerer and faster that she was vnited with God, the more she feared to become his enemy, and to be depriued of him, through which affection, without any perrill at all of vayne glory, she could alwaies enioy his preience. She thought that before this diuine imperiall Maiesty al mortall creatures were reduced into nothing, and not to be esteemed, and a most cleere intellectuall light was infused into her by which she did in a very extraordi-

traordinary manner apprehend, that God only could enrich her with glory, of whome by grace she might receaue infinit good: & by iustice infini e paynes, whence she iudged and set it downe in her hart, that it was great folly to delight in vanityes, and out of feare of vayne glory not to receaue diuine comforts, or neglect to doe good in publike. I doe not say this for the young Virgins who do but begin, but for the perfect that mak no reckoning of this world. To which perfection most firme and sollid, no one doth attayne but such as haue carried the crosse with payne and trauaile, and haue walked by the way of many temptations.

The aforesayd Virgin being

desirous now to shew how these diabolicall visions may be discouered, by the experience which she learned in the apparitions aboue rehearsed, sayd, That in all those three shapes wherin the diuell appeared vnto her, she neuer fell so much as into a thought during the apparition to doubt whether it were a wicked spirit, or no; but presently without examination of what it might be, in verity belieued that it was a good spirit. The reason she neuer apprehended danger, was, because the deceitfull enemy appearing vnder those formes, still exhorted her vnto that vertue which he knew to be excellent, and loued, and esteemed aboue al other, to wit, Obedience: Afterwards he tempted

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and excited her with great importunity to thinges wholy contrary to that vertue, suggesting many bad thoughts to iudge her Superiour: and then agayne vnder the colour and cloke of contrition, he stirred vp in her a wonderfull great and excessiue sorrow, intending to plunge her into the most profound depth of most pestilent sadnes, as if all that had proceeded from her selfe, and from no other cause, prouoking her interiourly to blaspheme and to despayre. Against which temptations she neuer found any remedy, neyther by cõfession or any other meanes, till at last the diuell fled away by this occasion.

As she vvas sleeping he came at one tyme hissing in her eare, bid

ding her blaſpheme: wherunto in her ſleepe reſiſting ſhe anſwered, I wil neuer doe it, I wil neuer doe it. This the enemy took with ſo great indignation, & ſhewed ſuch rage that with the horrible noyſe he made, ſhe awaked & felt him to depart frō her, wherby ſhe did plainly know that it was the ancient enemy who had ſo lōg time tormēted her by ſuggeſting thoſe blaſphemies, and perſwading her that what ſhe did ſuffer proceeded frō her owne peruerſnes, to the end to caſt her into deſpayre. Wherfore beloued Siſters, if at any time any of you be prouoked to this combat, let her neuer abandone prudence & diſcretion, nor afflict her ſelfe with ſorrow & ſadnes, as if ſuch horrible wickedneſſe did

ſpringe

ſpringe from her owne fault. Let her be aſſured that the mallice of the Diuell, which cannot indure that God ſhould be honored, is the cauſe of all, bending her ſelfe wholy to celebrate the prayſes of her creatour, and honour him in contempt of Lucifer and his Infernall ſpirits. And being deſirous yet more clearly and euidently to manifeſt that which had happened, and the vehemency of her temptations, for others better inſtruction, ſhe ſayd, that it ſeemed vnto her, that all the good will which ſhe had was for that tyme caſt aſleepe, and abſorpt from all good workes, in ſo much that the leaſt ſtraw that was preſented vnto her did ordinarily ſeeme a great beame: and ſo depriued ſhe was

of al taſt of the diuine honour, that it ſeemed ſhe was without ſpirit or life, and out of herſelfe: and many yeares paſſed before ſhe could recouer any comfort or deuotion in praier. Moreouer when any celeſtiall viſions were ſhewed her, ſhe felt her ſelfe ſpurred to vaine glory, the crafty enemy inſtigating her to diuulge them, that by this meanes ſhe might come to be eſteemed holy & vertuous; agaynſt which temptation ſtriuing ſhe did moſt carefully hide them.

It is alſo worthy to be conſidered with how great ſubtilty the enemy firſt inſtructed her in Obedience, and afterwardes ſuggeſted thinges directly contrary, making her belieue that thoſe diſobedient

thoughts

thoughts proceeded from no other cauſe then from her ſelfe: ſo plunging her into extreme ſadnes was ſo grieuous, that being deliuered therof ſhe ſayd, that were it put to her choyſe eyther to dye in torture, or to fall agayn into the ſame ſadnes, ſhe ſhould chooſe the torture as more tollerable, yea that in compariſon of that peſtilent ſadnes any torture would ſeeme pleaſant vnto her. Wherfore although it may ſeeme much preſumption in me, notwithſtanding I beſeech with my whole hart, thoſe that ſhall heerafter beare Rule in this monaſtery, that they will imploy their whole care to watch ouer their flocke, aſſuring themſelues that the rauening infernall wolfe doth continually lye

in wayte seeking whome he may deuour.

It is therfore requisit to, be watchfull, & not to delay succour vntill the wolfe hath set his teeth on the sheep, to their extreme perill and danger, but immediatly most promptly & mildly relieue the necessityes both of body and mind. O how pleasing a thing is it to God, how hollsome & profitable to the subiect, for the Superiour to giue succour and ayde before it be sought and required, seing the thing is lesse gratefull and halfe payed for, before it be had, which is not obtained but by asking and intreaty. And who is there so void of sense, that hauing hurt his foot or little finger, will not presently bow downe his head to behould

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it, ſtretch forth his hand to remedy it. So euery Superiour who is the head of the family committed to his charge ought without any delay behaue himſelfe towards the members which are ſubiect vnto him. But this ſhall ſuffice fearing leaſt I ſhould open the eyes of the ſimple doues, whome withall affection I recommend to him who continually and without ceaſing ſeeth all thinges.

I alſo aduiſe & counſayle thoſe that rule, that they make more accoũt of the leaſt Soule which they haue vnder their charge, then of al the world togeather, with all the glory, beauty, & ornamẽt therof: ſo that ſuperiority to thoſe that do duly conſider it, is a burthen of great weight and wonderfull hea-

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uy. Furhermore let Superiours endeauour to shew signes of loue & charity particulerly to those who are tempted to disobedience, and whome they find to be most confident and sincere with them, then to others who walke not by that way, because such are more enamored of the vertue of obediēce, and doe with greater desire seeke after it. And the enemy (as it is manifest) assaulting & setting vpō the seruant of Iesus Christ, vseth principally to impugne that vertue which he knoweth to be more deeply imprinted in his hart. And blessed be those Religions that vndergo with patience such a combat, vanquishing themselues, the crowne of patience not being for them that were neuer tempted, nor

nor assaulted with disobedience.

Our Lord, who is infinit goodnes sayth in his ghospell, the Kingdome of heauen suffereth violence, and the violent carry it away: It followeth therfore that those shall not loose the merit of true obedience, who in the exercise of obedience vse force & violence to themselues, denying their owne pleasure and will, their proper opinion and iudgement: yea contrarywise they shall assuredly obtayne far greater glory in heauen, by reason of this violence, which to themselues they vse in subiecting their will, not only to their betters, but also to their equals, and inferiours. Our Redeemer taught vs the way of this vertue, when he made himselfe obedi-

obedient, not only to his eternall Father but also to his mother, and Saint Ioseph, as the ghospell doth declare, saying, *And he was subiect vnto them*; let the pride of mans hart be ashamed who wil not submit himselfe, but contrariwise desireth alwayes, & seeketh to command and rule others.

Let them likewise be ashamed who being inuited to the wedding of the Lambe, that is to say, to the Cloister of holy Religion, after they haue a little tyme sojourned at the gate of holy Obedience, thinke themselues capable of gouernment, and able to teach others: wherin they are very much deceaued, persuading themselues that they are come to the way of perfection, when they are fallen into

into the pit of presumption, not perceauing how far they haue stept backe, from the most humble and perfect obedience of Iesus Christ. For he, after he had bin nine and twenty yeares obedient and subiect, hiding the greatnes of his diuinity with the veile of his Virginall humanity, did not afterwardes abandon Obedience, but more opēly practise the same as if he had as yet not done any thing. He suffered so many kindes of cruell torments, reproches, igminyes, derisions, not only not acknowledged for the Sonne of God as he was, but contrary wise for a blasphemer of God, a breaker of his law: the Princes and Potentats of this world not only did not render vnto him the honour wherwith

wherwith euen their seruants will now adayes be honoured, but esteemed him as a foole, & a malefactour; all which thinges he endured and suffered for Obedience to accomplish the will and commandment of his eternall Father. And how perfect in Obedience he was, doth appeare in that he wold not only be subiect to his Father, but also to obay him, would submit himselfe to the power & will of most vile and abiect sinners, so far as to be cruelly vsed by them, and put to a most shamefull & ignominious death, so concluding the whole course of his Obedience.

This most illustrious and notable example ought to incite all those that are called to the state of Religi-

Religion to desire to be subiect to another, not only thirty three yeares, and more, as Iesus Christ was, but with great feruour of spirit to demand daily of him, to finish their liues in true & humble obedience, to the end they may better imitate him, who was not only obedient to his Father, & to mē, but also euen vnto insensible things. For cloathing himselfe with our passible flesh he did not refuse to be subiect vnto hunger, thirst, cold, heat, and other incōmodityes, most willingly vndergoing the myseries that are incident to humane nature, yea for Obedience he submitted himselfe to the cruell power of most sharp piercing nayles, hanging fastned with them to the Crosse til he ren-

dered vp his Soule. Why then ſhould any make doubt of their ſaluatiõ who paſſe from this mortall life accompanyed with this vertue, the which more then any other makes the ſeruant like vnto his Lord, for which alſo the eternall Father promiſed vnto Abraham, to ſend his only Sonne cloathed with our mortall fleſh, to reuiue mankind that was dead in ſinne.

Wherfore he that will build a ſpirituall houſe vp to heauen, let him lay for foundation this vertue, aſſuring himſelfe that he ſhall better worke his ſaluation by it, then by faſting, or any other corporall maceration, yea then by contemplation it ſelfe. No man ought to doubt, nor any, though

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of neuer so meane vnderstanding, can be ignorāt, that the seruants of Iesus Christ can do nothing more pleasing to their Lord then to giue themselues wholy to him, and renounce their owne will: for it is manifest, that he who leauing his own will and iudgement submits himselfe for the loue of his creatour, to the iudgemēt of another, doth a thing greater and of much more merit, then if he serued him of his owne freewill & according to his fancy. If Abraham were reputed iust, and commended by God himselfe, because he obayed his commaundement, farre greater praise shall she deserue, that for the loue of God submits herselfe to his seruant.

Reioyce then deerest Sisters

knowing that you can doe nothing more gratefull vnto Iesus Christ your Spouse, then to perseuer and finish your liues vnder the yoake wherunto for the loue of him you haue subiected your selues. Permit not your selues to be lead astray with the frauds and deceits of our anciēt enemy, who to some shewes a more straite way, and to others a more large, which doth ordinarily happen to those that are newly entred into a Religious state whom we cal nouices. For so soone as they are in the feild of the battell, they are straight put to their triall to the end that from grosse & heauy lead which they were before, they may be changed and turned into pure gold, that is to say, of tereſtriall &

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men subiect to their owne appetites they may become celestiall and spirituall.

This our Lord vseth, to the end to lead them by the same way, as he lead his owne Sonne, who (as we know) walked by the way of the Crosse from the first instant of his natiuity to the last moment of his life: for God louing them with Fatherly affection, to make them coheyres with his sonne, and partakers of his richesse, presently setteth thē into the way of the Crosse. By his permission the spirit of darcknes vnder the cloke & colour of good, seekes to intrap them, mouing them to repent thēselues of that which before with great feruour they desired. And no sooner are they entred into

Religion but the diuel ſtrikes ſuch a terrour into their ſoule, that many times they would certainly go forth and draw backe if ſhame did not retaine them.

This doth principally happen vnto thoſe that are to profit moſt in the ſeruice of God, who are moued not only to thinke that they haue not found God in Religion as they did hope to haue done, but alſo they feare that they haue loſt him, and are depriued of his grace, and of all cordiall affection towards him. For before that they were entred into the monaſtery they deſired with great feruour of ſpirit to forſake, for the loue of God, their kindred and neereſt friends: but being entred the crafty enemy ſtirrs vp in them deſires wholy

wholy contrary to the former, tempting them with such a feeling remembrance and tendernes of hart towardes their parentes, that night and day sleeping and waking they can thinke vpon no other thing. And whereas before their entrance they were desirous by many kindes of macerations to afflict their bodyes: now so many sorts of sensuall appetites and gluttonies are stirred vp in them, that scarcely dare they, being held backe by shame and by the silent grudge of cõscience, eat the bread which is set before them.

The diuell in fine, assaults thẽ in so many and diuers manners, that they are wholy depriued of all tast and feeling of the diuine loue, which we call Deuotion:

wherupon they fall into so great sadnes, as makes euery one of thē say, I was truly better before I came hither, and did serue God with more affection then now I doe. In this sort vnder colour of good, our Aduersary impugnes them that they may repent themselues of their purpose & returne back, laying before them a course of life more strait or more large, then they intēded. But the spouse of Iesus Christ must not in any sort consent vnto such deceits, yea with fortitude of mind & promptitude of spirit, let her force her owne will, and say vnto her selfe, If my Lord and God doe permit me to be tempted to the very last day my life, yet I will neuer consent nor permit my selfe to be o-

uercome, but alwaies will remaine firme and constant.

Being thus prepared, and resolued let her settle her selfe to prayer, and with the greatest feruour she can, say, both with hart and mouth: Iesu Christ, my most meeke Lord, by that infinit and ineffable charity which made thee to suffer at the piller, the torment of the most cruell scourges of thine enemyes to saue me, I beseech thee to giue me such force and constancy, that I may likewise winne the victory ouer myne enemyes, and get the vpper hand in this battell, & in all other which they shal wage against me: Whē she hath done this, let her at the name of Iesus bend her knees a hundred tymes more or lesse ac-

cording as she is able, still inuocating him; & whosoeuer shall pray in this sort with due preparation of hart, without doubt shall presently find remedy and help of his euill, as the good Father (of worthy memory) Saint Bernardin affirmes, whome I dare presume to call the Saint Paul of Saint Francis our Patriarks order. For euen as Iesus Christ would haue his owne life in all thinges to be represented in Saint Francis, so likewise he would that in his Order there should be one that should doe that which Saint Paul did, who neuer ceased to pronounce the Name of Iesus, nor euer was weary therof. And how much our Apostle of Saint Francis hath lately illustrated this holy Name, as well

wel by his sermons, as by deuising the glory or radiant Sunne which he first of al caused to be set about this holy Name in pictures, is hidden vnto none, so that he may very worthily be called the Saint Paul of our Patriarke Saint Francis.

But to returne to my former discourse; the aforesayd prayer being ended, if it happen (as God may so permit) that the temptation doe not cease, let her come without any other consideration to her spirituall Father, or mother, or mistresse, and say confidently: I confesse that I am grieuously tempted to goe forth of this monastery, but it displeaseth me greatly. I beseech you help me, put fetters on my feete, or cast me into

into prison till such tyme as this warre relent or cease in me, to the end I may persever in this place vnto which God hath called me. Which neuertheles you are not to doe, except your owne free and full consent draw you thereunto.

By this humiliation, God who is most kind & pittifull, and doth see the violence which you doe to your selfe, will be moued to commaund the wicked and infernall Spirits to depart, and no more to trouble or molest you: which shal be vnto you, not only in the next life a crowne of vnspeakable glory, but euen in this life an ornament of many vertues, accompanyed with many singular graces. Hereof we haue an example of a certayne person, who hauing by

diuine

diuine inspiration forsaken his Parents and friends, and being with great feruour entred into a monastery, a little after repenting himselfe, did burne with such desire of his parents, and was so violently prouoked to returne vnto thē, that being as it were made drunke with the remembrance of them, and surprised with a certayne fury he did runne hither and thither vp and downe the Monastery, imbracing the walles with great griefe and striuing to get vp ouer them.

The Religious of the Monastery seeing this, mooued with pitty and compassion, knowing no other meanes to help him, put him in prison with irons on his feete, where being for sometyme detay-

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ned he was so singularly assisted from heauen, that freed from this temptation, with so many vertues and celestiall gifts he came to be adorned, that he was held both for sanctity and diuine illuminations the first of the Monastery. By this we may vnderstand that those are very pleasing to God, that for the loue of him patiently suffer such assaults, and that he or she shall be blessed, and most blessed, who being roughly assaulted, doe neuer consent. God sayth of these in the Apocalips, *He that shall ouercome, I will make him a pitter in my temple*: & the glorious Apostle S. Iames, *Blessed is he that suffereth temptation, for when he shall be prooued, he shall receaue the Crowne of life.*

They are very much deceaued who

who comming to the seruice of God, thinke that sweetnes, ioy, and tranquility of spirit must alwayes accompany them: our Sauiour doth not exact this of his faythfull seruants when he sayth, *he that will come after me, let him renounce himselfe take vp his Crosse & follow me*, giuing vs an example in himselfe who did descend from heauen, not to rest but to fight, in liew of honour to receaue contempt, in exchange of rest to suffer incounters, insteed of riches to liue in pouerty, in place of satiety chooſing hunger and thirst; in fine he vndertooke so great and cruell a combat as he was slayne in the field. Therfore my deerest Sisters, the Espouse that desires to vnite her selfe to Iesus Christ her Spouse,

Spouse, ought singularly to labour to imitate him in all things, and to resigne her selfe to suffer trauels both of mind and body: prouided notwithstanding, first that she vndertake nothing without the counsaile of her Superiour, or Mistresse, seing the vertue of obedience goeth before all other and surpasses them all, leading to heauen, and on all sides there is security in it.

Prouided also secondly that the Religious who are subiect, discouuer their temptations, to them vnder whose charge and gouernement they liue: for to giue relieſe and succour agaynst a secret and vnknowme combat is altogeather impossible: yea the more that the thing seemes good and secure, the

sooner

ſooner ought the Religious to manifeſt it, leaſt peraduenture they be deceaued vnder the colour of good, as ſhe was of whō we haue now ſpoken, for whome the diuell layd his ſnares vnder the figure of Ieſus Chriſt, and the glorious Virgin. Another deceit of fraud alſo was faſtened vpon her, the which I will not paſſe vnder ſilence, to the end that by anothers harme, I may make thoſe more aduiſed who walke by the way of prayer and ſpirituall comforts.

One night as ſhe was at Nocturnes, ſhe felt a certayne ſuddayne and extraordinary ioy ſtirred vp in her mind, and belieuing this came from the good ſpirit, ſtayed in her diuine office without going

eyther forth of the quire, or out of her place, fearing least thereby she should manifest any thing which passed whithin her. For considering diligently with her selfe, she thoght how noble God had created both man and woman, giuing them free will, to doe eyther good or bad, how he was in a manner constrayned by iustice to crowne those that doe good, that for this cause the Apostle sayd, that a Crowne of iustice was reserued & layed vp for him, because he had exercised his freewill in good works, leauing the euill which he might haue done. She hauing spēt sometyme in this thought persevered in this opinion, that this came vnto her by the diuine grace.

The

The night following being likewise at Nocturnes, a wonderfull great sadnes fell vpon her, with such wearisomnes of mind & body that scarsly could she beare it. She beganne straight to thinke of her labours and exercises, both of the diuine Office and corporall macerations she vsed, and that for them according to iustice and equity an higher place was due vnto her, then that which Iesus Christ had gayned. For he was not subiect to the possibility of sinne, nor to admit the least motion or prouocation of vice, whereas she being exposed to danger, hauing free will to sinne and subiect to it had notwithstanding turned herselfe from the way of vice, & had imbraced the course of ver-

tue. But maturely waighing these comfortable discourses she did more then feare that they were ambushes of the diuell, and flying to the weapons of humility, he did depresse and humble her selfe in her thoughts to the lowest and deepest place in hell, considering that she had receaued of God the gift of good will; and vnderstood that the ioy that had bin stirred vp in her the night before was diabolicall, and not celestiall, that the diuell would haue perswaded her, that of her owne instinct and of herselfe she did the good that shee did, which is false, and nothing so. For although our will be free to doe good or euill, notwithstanding iustice doth require that we should doe good and not

euill

euill, which good yet we cannot doe without the diuine assistance, according to that which verity himselfe sayd in his Ghospell, *Without me you can doe nothing*.

And truly he must be very destitute and void of reason that can thinke he hath any thing of himselfe but vice, and sinne. But to returne to my purpose, I beseech you deerest Sisters and principally those that are newly come, and not only those that are present, but also that shall come at any tyme heerafter, that you will be vigilant, and apply your whole care and study to walke by the way of true obedience. This is the sacrifice which God doth demand of you, for which we should leaue

all thinges, yea prayer and contemplation it selfe, and all sweetnes of spirit. O how happy shall you be if with it you persever in good works, without seeking any thing which may eyther outwardly or inwardly delight you, conformable to that which Saint Bernard sayth, *to serue God is no other thing then to doe good and suffer euill*. For the true forme and manner of life which the seruants of God should follow, is to admit nothing which doth bring delight, except the delight be such as we cannot auoid.

Behold this is the secure way, & he that will approach vnto God for sweetnes & delight, doth greatly deceaue himselfe. All that you should demaund of God my deerest

reſt Siſters, all you ſhould delight your ſelues in, is for the loue of him to finiſh and end your liues in true obedience, and ſubiection. This will purchaſe you heauen, in this world you ſhall poſſeſſe holy prayer, by this you ſhall gayne all other vertues, as is manifeſt in the exãple of Bleſſed Paul the Simple, who in a little time that he ſerued God, by his obedience, obtayned of him the gift of doing miracles. The which I doe not ſay, to the end, that deſire of doing miracles ſhould moue any to imbrace the way of obedience, ſeing our Sauiour Ieſus Chriſt in his Ghoſpell doth not ſay, *Learne of me*, to doe miracles, but *to be meeke and humble of hart*. He that will ſerue God ought to ſeeke no greater miracle

then to end his life in vertue, and to perſeuer in the ſtate wherunto God hath called him, which is a great miracle and worthy of al admiration.

True it is, that ignorance doth not permit theſe things to come to the knowledge of thoſe who are wholy addicted vnto earth, who doe not know what a great thing it is to fight agaynſt ſuch enemies as they are, againſt whom the true ſeruants of God doe wage perpetuall warre, to wit, agaynſt the deceitfull world, that alwayes ſhewes himſelfe to carnall men a fauorite in apparence; agaynſt the fleſh which is continually rebellious to the ſpirit and neuer ceaſeth to fight agaynſt it with naturall weapõs: finally againſt the Infernal

ſpirits

ſpirits who are infinit in number, who like traitours and murderers, do alwayes ſeeke by many ſubtiltyes to kill ſecretly the ſoules of thoſe that are reſolued to ſerue God. Wherfore this miracle is great, and theſe warriours doe gayne far greater victoryes then thoſe that fight with materiall and military weapons. For what man is ſo incõſiderate & raſh that would (though he haue the wiſdom of Salomon) come to the field with his eyes ſhut, that is, to fight agaynſt enemyes whome he cannot ſee.

By this then the ſeruants of God may cleerly vnderſtãd what a great miracle they worke when they perſeuer in their vndertaken cõbat of perfection, to the confu-

sion of those to whome nothing doth tast but earth, who call spirituall & religious warriours base and beggarly companions without wit or iudgement: Those warriours I say, are only worthy of glory and renowne who without intermission fight against inuisible enemyes, against wicked spirits, crafty, strong, neuer ceasing to wage warre against them; still labouring to ouerthrow them, and withdraw them from the seruice of God, who when one fraud doth not the deed, presently inuent & bring another into the field: when they see that they cannot deuert the Virgin of Christ Iesus fró her purpose, they striue to make her immoderate and indiscreet in her feruours. He moones her to transgresse

transgresse the common manner of life, to exceed the limits of discretion; whereby she comes to be weakned aboue measure, or to fal into some great sicknes that cõstraynes her to leaue of prayer & all other vertuous exercises. Then she (her spirit not being yet well exercised in deuotion) waxeth could, tepide, and almost intollerable to herselfe by this relaxation inforced through sicknes, depriuing God of his honour, and her company of the sweet odour of her good example which otherwise they might haue enioyed, which doth iustly befall her because she neglected the counsaile of her Superiour, or Mystresse.

If this temptation also serue not the enemyes turne, he seeketh ano-

another. For perceauing the Virgin and seruant of God to tast the sweetnes of diuine loue in her prayer, he presently suggestes a desire of solitude, and sayth vnto her, If thou didst choose a solitary place wherin to attend night and day to prayer according to thy desire, thou shouldst soone find wõderfull comfort and delight in God. Wherfore deerest Sisters be discreet, call to mind that this coũsayle, this desire doth not accord with the most holsome and trùe counsell of Iesus Christ, who doth admonish not to follow the sweetnes and ioy of spirit, not the desires and appetits of selfe-will, but full of loue to cary the Crosse, and deny of our selues, as if he would say, He that will follow me in the way

way of ſoueraigne perfection, let him caſt away all his owne freedome, and leauing all thinges, run to the Cloiſter and Eſtate of Religion, which may truly be called a Croſſe. This kind of carrying our Croſſe, is far more excellent, then to follow the comforts and ſweetnes of ſpirit which may cleerly be knowne by that which we ſee in this preſent age: for many of either ſexe that ſerue God haue many interior feelings & taſts of many celeſtial things, haue eleuatiõs of ſpirit, yet for al theſe things they doe not obtaine the grace of doing miracles, nor to know the ſecret thoughts of others, nor to propheſy of thinges to come.

In the ſame mãner the aforeſaid graces of doing miracles, & prophecying

phecying were granted to those, that haue gone by the way of the Cresse, in the state of true obedience. Of which number our holy Father S. Francis was, vvho sayd that he was ready to obay & submit himself to one that was but newly entred into the monastery, & he added, that he more esteemed one that walketh by the way of temptations, then one that passeth by comforts and sweetnes of sprit. He said likewise that a Religious man should be like to a dead man, that doth neither resist nor contradict any Body, if one break his head he stirreth not, nor is mooued with any thing.

Of this we haue an example in the sacred Virgin, in Saint Theodore, and in many other, who truly

truly were, and merit to be called Saintes, not for the taſtes, and conſolations they felt in God, but becauſe vnder the yoake of Obedience to their Superiours, yea to their equals, and inferiours, they carryed with great patience the Croſſe of labours, vvhich their monaſteries impoſed vpon them. Furthermore enduring hunger, thirſt, cold, reproaches, deriſions, infamies, and to briefe iniuries, perſecutions, vvith innumerable ſharp temptations, not only from their ovvne fleſh and fragility of ſexe, not only from the rage and fury of vvicked Spirits, but alſo from thoſe that in ſuch diſtreſſe and neceſſity ſhould haue byn their comfort, and ayd, to vvit, from their ovvne Siſters and

Supe-

Superiours: & why all this? for no other cause truly then to take away the opiniõ that others had of their sanctity, that they might not haue any name, or reputation of Saintes, nor be esteemed the first but the last, the most vile and abiect of men, hiding euery one of their celestiall gifts and vertues.

Hence they obtayned to be esteemed fooles, and vicious, rather then wise, and vertuous; not for that they did in the monastery any thing for which they might be so iudged and esteemed, but because they wold not cõtradict nor cleare themselues of those thinges which were layed to their charge, imbracing those disgraces that were offered them as a great glory and felicity. Behold heere the true

true rich ornaments, and pretious attire of the great & mighty Emperour Christ Iesus, who sayth, If any wil come vnto me (the foutaine of truth) he must walke by the strait & narrow way. Wherfore deerest Sisters, reioyce in that you are called to the strait way, to renounce all vaine delights wherwith nature is defiled, to fight courragiously against your owne fragility, to submit your will for the loue of God vnto euery one; and this to the end that the spirit of peace may rest in you, and you be the true habitatiõ of the holy Gost as God himselfe doth say, *Vpon whome shall my spirit rest, but vpon the humble & meeke?*

Now the meanes to attaine to this humility and meeknes we are

taught by Brother Giles the deere companion of our Patriarke Saint Francis. For he (as we find written) was wont to say, that he that will enioy interiour peace, the true mother of humble meeknes, must thinke euery one his Superiour, he must loue and not desire to be loued, must serue and not desire to be serued. Wherefore Truth himselfe from the Crosse sayth to euery careleſſe religious person, O sinner wilt thou neuer repent that thou hast offended me so much, me that haue redeemed thee on the Crosse with my owne bloud, with most grieuous torments; In the state where thou hast put thy selfe I vvill haue thee remaine.

To shew the truth of this I will not

not conceale that which happened to the Religious woman of whom we haue ſpoken before, to whom the diuell appeared in the forme of Ieſus crucifyed. She at the begining of her conuerſion being entred in this place, and hauing liued in religion ſome yeares, beginning to taſte the ſweetnes of diuine loue had a great deſire of ſolitude: this deſire did dayly increaſe in her, ſo much the more, becauſe nothing could hinder her from that courſe, the Monaſtery not being as yet tyed to any Rule of Religion, notwithſtanding ſhe was ſomthing doubtfull of the matter, and not daring to truſt her ſelfe, ſhe reſolued to conſult the buſines with God, beſeeching him with great vehemency & feruour

night and day to manifest his will vnto her: In fine, she was heard. For one day about the third howre, praying in the Church of this monastery very instantly for the same thing, God, amongst many other things which I now omit, declared vnto her an answere to her petition, to wit that euery one ought to persever in the place wherunto God had called them: straight she changed her desire of solitude to obay God whose wil now she knew was to haue her persever in that place he first called her vnto.

Wherfore if any Virgin that is entred into Religion, be at any tyme, eyther at the beginning, or middle, or end, tempted to goe forth, or with any other euill thing

thing that make her weary of her good purpose, let her resist courageously calling to mind that which the sacred Doctour Saint Augustin out of holy Scripture sayth, that the life of man is a continuall temptation vpon earth. The Religious person continually assaulted and neuer yealding is most happy, as may appeare by an example which I will relate, which I learned of a venerable Religious man. Into the monastery where this venerable man liued, did enter a young man with great feruour, who presently at the very beginning suffered great combatts finding himselfe exceedingly prouoked to goe forth. To which motion not consenting in any manner, but constantly resi-

sting, he supported the assault with patience; so that being victorious in Religion most happily he finished his life. His death by the will of God, was illustrated with many miracles, that men might know, first that he had merited the the crowne of sanctity, in that for the loue of Iesus he alwaies most constantly resisted continuall tẽptations: secondly that the vertue of patience is most pleasing vnto God. Finally that the way of sanctity is to resigne our selues to Gods holy will in temptations, aduersities, and all thinges painfull that may befall vs by his permission.

O deerest Sisters be mindful of S. Bernards saying, It is a thing vndecent that vnder a thorny head there

there be delicate members. If you desire not only to be members of Christ Iesus, but also his true seruants, yea his spouses, you must walke by the thorny way, following the pathes which he traced and made plaine vnto you. This we may the better performe if we remember, and set before our eyes from what an high degree of honour and maiesty to what a low step of humility & contempt he descended, from riches to pouerty, from plenty to want, from ioy to torments, from a Kingdome to seruitude, from liberty to obedience, from strength and health to weaknes and infirmity, from the throne of glory to lye between an Ox and an Asse, from the Pontificall Dignity of high

Priest, to haue Ioseph a Carpenter his companion, yea his commander; in liew of Royall ministers and Angelicall attendants to be waited on by poore Fishermen; to come from heauen to begge his bread, shrovvding the splendour of his diuinity in the ragges of our mortality, hiding his Imperiall Maiesty by hanging betweene two theeues. Reioice my deere Sisters that you walke the way that Iesus went, by which all that euer entred into heauen, haue passed. I would haue you belieue, and most firmely perswaded that it is necessary that the true seruants of Iesus be assaulted & suffer; that it is soueraigne felicity to be humbled and held vnder; great riches to be poore; high

honour

honour to be despised; singular dignity to be in all thinges the last and least esteemed; speciall comfort to be persecuted for good workes; perfect health to be sicke for the loue of Iesus; supreme & inestimable wisdome to be esteemed for his sake fooles and voyd of iudgement. Finally the happyest life to dye by most cruell martirdome, that afterwards we may liue and reioyce in all eternity.

These (beloued Sisters) are the Iewels and ornaments that will make you most excellently beautifull in the presence of our eternall and inuisible King, for whose loue I pray and beseech you as much as I am able, that with true constant patience you will support all perturbations

of this preſent life: you alſo that are but lately entred into the monaſtery, take heed of doing, as ſome vnwiſe and vnprudent are accuſtomed to doe, who thinke that all goeth well with them whē they are loued of their Superiours and miſtreſſes as much as they deſire, and are mildly and louingly vſed, being in no ſort able to ſupport the leaſt angry looke, or to be reprehended: and if any ſuch thing happen vnto them, they are impatient and much troubled; the which is very reprehenſible.

A good Religious Virgin ought to be otherwiſe perſwaded that when of motherly charity they giue her a blow on one cheek ſhe turne the other, and the rougher that the way is by which her Supe-

Superiour leads her, the more she doth loue and reuerence her, calling to mind that Iesus the most meeke lambe neuer gaue ouer the obedience of his Father, although for the accomplishment thereof, he suffered hatred and cõtumely, and was exposed to so many stripes and grieuous torments. If therfore liuing vnder obedience she find her selfe hated & on all sides afflicted, let her not lay the fault vpon the creature, but beare that Crosse patiently, courageously, ioyfully, beleiuing it to be a peculiar gift sent her from the eternall Father, who permits these things to happen to his children, to make them partakers of the inheritance of his beloued Sonne, that beloued sonne I say, who still

inuites

inuites vs to the straite and laborious way, giuing himselfe for an example: shall the faithfull seruant be so imprudent, shall the spouse of Christ be so vnkind as to cast that from her, which her Lord descended from heauen to seeke, to refuse labours of Body or minde which he most louingly imbraced?

For this cause Saint Paul sayd, *God forbid that we should glory in any thing, but in the Crosse of our Lord Iesus Christ.* Let not any be slow or slacke to doe good, seeing she that offers not great violence to herself can neuer be the true spouse of Iesus, for whose loue if you refuse to suffer payne, you shall neuer liue with him in glory. And on the contrary side, be assured that the

more

more you leaue your ſelues, the ſooner ſhall you find him who will neuer leaue nor forſake you. Neither is it without iuſt cauſe that we ſay if you will gayne all things giue your ſelfe wholy vnto Ieſus, and in true meeknes offer your ſelfe entierly vnto his diuine pleaſure. For the more perfect that one is, the more he is conioyned and vnited with the will of God; and the greater that the perfection is that we haue gayned, the more ought we to feare.

Take this aduiſe from the aforſayd ſeruant of Ieſus to whome the diuell appeared vnder the forme of the Crucifix. For I may in verity ſay, and I am not deceaued, that before this fraud ſhe had receaued of God great graces

and

and excellent vertues, glorious victories in many combats, that if I would recount them all, I should make my discourse tedious and prolix. Notwithstanding I will recount vnto you this one to the prayse of Iesus Christ, and for the instruction my deerest Sisters, that you may be more aduised, and learne to stād stil in feare, after the receauing of many heauēly gifts, neuer perswading your selues to vnderstand, or to be able to doe any good, but only so much as God shall giue you light and strength to know and performe. For this seruant of Iesus (as I haue told you) was for somtime by the permission of God left to the power of wicked spirits, only because she deceaued her selfe, thinking pre-

sumptu-

ſumptuouſly that ſhe could diſcouer and withſtand any of their deceits and tentations: and yet ſhe before this fell out had paſſed by the degrees of perfection, & was ariued to the particular knowledg of them, in ſo much that it was ſhewed vnto her, that her Soule was reſtored to its firſt innocency. She had a long and great combat agaynſt ſleep, which did not only oppreſſe her in the night, but alſo in the day, which to coquer ſhe remained alwaies vpon her knees with her armes ſtretched forth in forme of a Croſſe, whē either ſhe prayed priuately, or aſſiſted at the diuin office, or at the holy ſacrifice of the Maſſe. At which dreadful ſacrifice being preſent one day with her armes extended, for the cauſe

abou-

aboue mentioned doing her vttermost endeauours to resist that sweet and forcible enemy Sleep, not finding remedy against the mighty assaults thereof, she did halfe despaire: and truly she had forsaken the combat, had not God at that instant interposed his help. For before the Priest came to lift vp (as is the custome) the Body of our Lord, hauing begonne to say, Sanctus, Sanctus, at the same instant she heard a company of Angels, repeate the same word with admirable harmony, so sweet and melodious, that her Soule began to goe forth of her Body, and if it had byn permitted her to haue heard the word Sanctus intierly pronounced as the Angels song it, without doubt her soule would haue

haue departed.

After this she had such victory and mastery ouer sleep, that for a long space of tyme, she receaued no molestation nor trouble, but cold without any difficulty watch as much as she would. So my deerest Sisters, let not labour grieue you to fight agaynst sleepe, or any other thing how difficile soeuer it be, by conquest wherof you merit the reward of eternall repose. It cannot be imagined and much lesse expressed, how sweet vvas that Angelicall musicke, though very short, and ended in the twinkling of an eye. The melody thereof made her forget at that instant not only all thinges created but her selfe also, her soule (as I sayd) beginning to depart out

of her Body. And though she were on her knees with her armes spread abroad, yet she did not moue any whit at al, so that none of those that were present perceaued any thing.

But I will rehearse a thing far more admirable. God intending to proue her, withdrew from her the flame of his diuine loue, depriued the eyes of her vnderstanding of the gratious and pleasant sight of Iesus Christ who was often accustomed to visit, and comfort her. This cast her into so great sadnes that she was almost continually in teares and lamentations. Hauing suffered this torment a long time, on the vigill of the Natiuity of our Sauiour she besought her Superiour to permit her to watch

watch that night in the Church of the monastery, which being granted she entred the Church with great deuotion, intending to repeate a thousand times the Angelicall saluration Aue Maria, in honour of the glorious Virgin mother of Iesus, wherin busied with great attétion till the fourth houre of the night (at which houre I doe belique that our Lord Iesus was borne) the Mother of God appeared vnto her, holding in her armes her little child Iesus, swadled in such sort as children newly borne are wont to be.

And comming neere to the aforesayd seruant of Gōd, gaue her graciously her little child to hold in her armes, whome she, (knowing him to be the true son

of the eternall Father) with incredible ioy did imbrace, warmed him, and ſweetly layed him in her lappe, ioyning her face to his little but moſt ſacred mouth. By which touching ſo great comfort was ſtirred vp within her, that through vnſpeakable ſweetnes ſhe ſeemed wholy to melt inwardly and diſſolue euẽ as wax doth before fire. From the moſt pure and pretious fleſh of the little child Ieſus proceed ſo ſweet an Odour, that no wordes in the world can ſufficiently expreſſe it, nor any humane vnderſtanding comprehend it. How great the beauty of this child was, how gracious and ſmiling his heauenly viſage, I leaue to the conſideration of thoſe who reade or heare this viſion: only for my own com-

comfort, I say, O hart without sense, and more hard then any thing created, why didst thou not through aboundant of sweetnes melt like snow in the Sunne, when thou didst tast and imbrace so louingly the splendour and brightnes of the glory of his Father.

This vision was not a dreame, nor an imagination, nor an excesse of mind, but true, reall, and manifest, though continuing but for a while. For as soone as she had ioyned her face to his sacred mouth the vision disappeared, yet left in her so great ioy that her hart and all the parts of her body for a long tyme after did leape for ioy. In this sort her great & long bitter sadnes, caused by the long absence of Iesus was dissipated &

departed, nor after this was she euer detayned for any long tyme with any griefe; Learne then my deerly beloued Sisters, to beare the absence of diuin cõfort, & during that time indeauour as much as you shall be able, to perseuer constant in prayer, both vocall & mentall, and in all other holy and vertuous workes, till it shall please the diuine clemency to renew in your harts the flame of his most Viginall and chast loue. For God when he hath for sometime tryed a Soule, withdrawing from her his presence and sweet visitation, if she perseuer constant and faithful, cannot be long without comforting her and that abondantly, restoring what he tooke from her when she thinketh least thereof.

And

And here I requeſt frō the bottom of my hart, and with al my affection, the Superiours who ſhall ſucceed hereafter in this monaſtery, that with diligence, loue, pitty, & motherly commiſeration they comfort the mindes and bodyes of their Religious that are thus afflicted and reduced to ſuch anxiety of ſpirit.

Certainly, there is no griefe greater nor ſharper then that of a Soule which thinks her ſelfe depriued of the diuine grace: I ſay thinkes, becauſe to thinke is not to know for certainty. And the reaſon is becauſe a ſoule ignorant of what perfect diuine loue is, doth thinke her ſelfe depriued therof, when ſhe feeleth not in her deuotions ſweetnes and accuſto-

med delight, when she doth not enioy the presence of the humanity of Iesus, then being so afflicted with sorrow, that none is able to comprehēd it, but those that haue had experience thereof, God notwithstanding is then after a secret and hidden manner conioyned with the Soule by a noble and triumphant kind of loue, whereof the present griefe is a manifest signe and token, sorrow and griefe still keeping iust proportion with loue: So the soule afflicted for not feeling that accustomed sweetnes of loue, hath both loue and griefe vnited together, seing the absence of a thing we doe not loue, cannot beget sorrow.

Weake spirits comprehend not this truth, because they loue the

gift more then the giuer: so it is neceſſary that God ſubtract the ſenſible ſweetnes of his loue from ſuch a wauering ſoule, & lye hidde in her vnder the veile of griefe, that ſhe may paſſe through a ſea of ſorrow to the perfection of his loue. This ſorrow ſurpaſſeth in aſperity, all other ſorrowes, which ſeemes not true to thoſe that haue not made tryall therof, as principally worldly women, that haue not as yet any beginning in things that belóg vnto God. Theſe think there is no greater griefe then that cauſed by the death of children, and friendes, which is not ſo, ſeing after ſuch deaths and depriuings from thinges beloued, they may hope one day to poſſeſſe God and enioy heauen. But the ſeruant of

Iesus that hath settled all her loue in him, espoused vnto him by the ring of Goodwil, wherby she hath forsaken not only her friends, her parents, and all thinges created, but her selfe also; when she belieueth that she is debarred of God himselfe, whose loue she hath in part tasted, and experienced the sweetnes therof, cannot choose but feele extreamest affliction, seing from God she can conceaue no ioy nor any cõfort. This is the cause that the sorrow of such a Soule is incomprehensible, because God whome she thinketh she hath lost, is incomprehensible; so it is cleere that those that walke by the way of diuine loue, suffer far greater sorrowes then any other whatsoeuer. But all the ser-

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uants of God walke not by the forsayd way of sorrow, because very few in these dayes passe by the degrees of perfection, & none can feele the sharpnes of the aforsayd sorrow, but those that haue mouted by these degrees, hauing had some taste and experience of God.

Wherfore we may truly say, Many are called but few chosen, seing many haue so little of the length & breadth of diuine loue, that they faint in the aforesaid sorrow, yea the natural forces of man are in these times so weakned, that there are few that hold out strong in spirituall exercises. Whence proceedeth, that the number that attaine to the top of perfection is very small, because the weapons

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by which we must attaine herunto, for want of exercise are made vnprofitable, principally that kind of weapons which are necessary to support Crosses and tribulations. For which reason we daily see many of each sexe, that haue retired themselues to serue God, want no resolution so long as the hunny of their first feruour and deuotion continueth: but so soone as it beginneth to fayle, and that the tempest of temptation assaultes them (without which we cannot attaine to perfection) presently their courage quailes, their strēgth fainteth, their resolution groweth feeble. But you, my deerest Sisters be strong & constant in your combats, in which if you find your forces to faint you, yet con-

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ſerue the deſire of a Good will, to doe good & great things, & to ſuffer many Croſſes, that what cannot be accompliſhed in effect, may be performed through feruent and inflamed deſire, to the prayſe of your ſweet Sauiour Ieſus.

I will moreouer ſet down what hapned to the forſayd ſeruant of Ieſus Chriſt, a relation moſt true God is my witnes. She had for a long tyme moſt vehement temptations of infidelity, and want of faith about the Reall preſence of the holy Sacrament of the Altar. Being much afflicted and finding no remedy either by confeſſion or any other meanes, weeping moſt bitterly, with vehement affliction of ſpirit ſhe called almoſt continually

tinually vpon God. On the dayes of holy communion more then at any time else the temptation was vehemēt with her, in such sort that being preser at that heauenly banquet, she found herselfe mooued with no feeling of honour, and reuerence towards it.

At one time so farre did this temptation and most cruell combat increase, that battered with vehemency of griefe, she was almost ready to faint: for being on her knees in the Church amongst the other Virgins (as is the custom after the sacred communion) she fell into such an agony, that one while she sat down, another while vp, not perceauing her selfe, or minding what she did, so great was her affliction not finding any rest.

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But the benignity of our high God, which permitted the combat, in like sort ordayned the victory in due tyme and season: for one day betimes in the morning as this Virgin was in the Church of the monastery attentiue vnto prayer, he comforted her, & spake vnto her, not corporally, but in spirit. He plainly shewed her, how in the host consecrated by the Priest, the whole humanity of Iesus Christ was contained, how vnder a little forme of bread, God & Man could be comprehended: he gaue her also a cleare and perfect knowledge of faith, in all thinges belonging to the holy Eucharist, driuing from her all that had molested her in tymes past, and all doubts that she had, or might haue

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heerafter, declaring by many naturall and rare examples the possibility and manner of so high a mystery.

Moreouer he shewed her that one doth not loose the effect, nor the grace of the Sacrament of the Body of Iesus by approaching vnto it without the tast and sensible feeling of honour and reuerence towards the same, prouided that we come accompanyed with an vpright conscience: nor doth any temptation or doubt in faith depriue vs of the fruit thereof, so that we consent not vnto them: yea that the Soule in such a combat bearing out the storme with patience, hath more merit, then if with great sweetnes and delight she receaue the holy Eucharist.

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It was also declared vnto her, how Iesus Christ the Son of good could be incarnate in the wombe of the glorious Virgin, by the vertue of the holy Ghost, and be brought forth into the world, without any corruption or losse of his mothers integrity: she had also a particular knowledge of the mistery of the most high Trinity, & of other things worthy of memory, the which I am forced to omit, through the imbecility and weaknes of my memory. These thinges did so comforte, and recreate her hart, that she was freed from the griefe of the temptation agaynst the B. Sacrament as if she had neuer felt it. And the first time that after this she came vnto that Celestiall Banquet, she felt so great

& so vnspeakable sweetnes in the pure flesh of the Immaculate lãbe of God, Iesus, that no speach is able to expresse it, nor any humane vnderstanding to conceaue it. She might then truly haue sayd, *my hart, and my flesh haue reioyced in the liuing God*. Afterward she enioyed such tranquility of spirit, was so confirmed in fayth, that all men togeather could not haue perswaded her the contrary, or haue diuerted her from her beliefe: so that al the sorrow she had suffered was turned into ioy, that she euen reioyced to haue byn afflicted, & would not for any thing but that she had endured the aforesayd encounters, seeing profit and ioy spring so abundantly from them. For this cause that great Herauld

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the Apostle Saint Paul crieth, if we be be companiõs in his sufferings, we shall also be companions in his consolatiõs. Morouer these things planted, in her such an earnest desire (which neuer failed) to come oftẽ to this food, that it was her singular griefe not to come so oftẽ as she desired. And one day wanting this diuine Sacrament, and in that respect breaking forth into great abundance of teares, as if riuers had flowed from her eyes, she felt her Soule diuinely, and in a most vnspeakable manner to be refectionated with that most desirable sustenance, to the prayse of Iesus Christ.

This may serue for the instruction & comfort of young plants not yet confirmed in the know-

ledge of this moſt high myſtery, their ignorance and imbecility being cauſe therof, not able to attaine to the knowledge of ſo great and ſo heauenly things. Wherfore beloued Sifters if it happen at any tyme, that any of you by diuine permiſſion, be tempted with the aforeſaid infidelity, not giuing your conſent therunto, feare nothing but receaue confidently the ſacred Body of Ieſus your Sauior, out of his infinit loue coming towardes you.

O incomprehenſible and ſoueraygne depth of humility in our Sauiour, who not only ſubmitted and debaſed himſelfe, ſo farre, as to cloth himſelfe with our infirme, vile, and fraile mortality, made obedient vnto death,

and

and the death of the Crosse, but euen to this present day, and so long as mankind shall continue, is obedient vnto Priestes, at whose pronouncing the wordes of Consecration, he doth dayly descend from heauen to earth, though the Priest that pronounceth them, be mortal and subiect vnto sinne, yea a sinner, contrary to the duety of so noble and excellent a mystery which requires men altogeather holy and celestiall.

For which cause I exhort you deerest Sisters, first to pray for Priests without intermission vnto God, that he will vouchsafe to sanctify all their senses, that by the diuine help of his grace, they may worthily discharge their office in all thinges, belonging to so

worthy, high, & sacred a mistery, that they may most reuerently handle the most sacred Body of Iesus Christ, the most meeke & immaculate lambe your spouse, and the spouse of all virginall & chast soules. Secōdly let not the way of obediēce seem straite & hard vnto you, seeing Iesus Christ your Lord and maister, not only during the pilgrimage of his mortall habitation with vs, but also in his celestial Kingdom, giues vs so frequēt an example thereof, descending daily on the Altar, called from heauen by the words of Consecration, bestowing himselfe totally on vs to be our refection, vnder the formes of bread & wine.

Wherfore, O noble soule, make not thy selfe so vile and abiect & by degene-

degenerous affections as to delay the receauing of him who comes vnto thee, with ſuch bountifull liberality, as he is ready to feed thee with his own diuine ſubſtãce. And you O Sinners, delay not to run inſtantly vnto him who hath made himſelfe meate to nouriſh you. Alas in what thicke darknes is mãs vnderſtanding enwrapped, that perſeueres in abſtaining from this moſt excellent Foode! Be you then vigilant my deereſt Siſters, that our Aduerſary deceaue you not vnder the vaile of forged humility, and depriue your ſoules of ſo great merit, as they gaine that often receaue the Body of Ieſus, doing the ſame with due preparation. I deſire likewiſe that you will be aduiſed by me, and I be-

seech you, as much as I am able, not only those that are at this present, but also all those that shall at any time succeed heerafter, that you will imploy all your endeauours before God, and all Christian people, by Regular obseruance, by sanctity of life, by perseuerance in your vndertaken enterprise of perfection to amplify the renown of this place, wherunto you haue bin by Gods singular mercy. Conserue the good name therof allready gained, not through ambitious desire, but to the praise and glory of the most sacred Body of Iesus Christ, to whose honour, as also in memory of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin his glorious mother, Bernardina our Venerable mother layd the foundati-

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ons of this monastery, & began to build it, & who dares be so presuptuous as to violate the renown of a Church consecrated to such a Sonne, and such a mother?

It is also worthy of memory, and not to be passed vnder silence, what hapned to the foresaid seruant of Iesus Christ. She being very desirous to obtaine Remission and pardon of all her Sinnes, for this effect beganne to pray earnestly vnto almighty God, that together he would giue her certain signes of the pardon obtained, which might assure her thereof. In the third yeare of her conuersion she went to the Church of the holy Ghost to make her confession to a venerable Religious man of that Monastery: these are true

labourers in the vineyard of our Lord, their liues are worthy of prayse before God, and men, though not known to the foolish, nor to those who tast nothing but earth. Alas I see that within short time, and without all faile it will come to passe, that those who mocke and deride them, calling thē hypocrites shal feele the smart of Gods most rigorous and seuere iudgement, and shall beare the punishmēt of their obstinate malice, so that it had bin better for them if their tongues had bin cut out, and minced as small as sand.

But to returne from whence I am departed, the aforesaid Virgin being in the aboue mentioned Church, hauing oftentimes besought

ſought Almighty God, that he would heare her, in the end according to her deſire he made it knowne vnto her, that he had remited & pardoned al her offences the guilt both of ſinne, fault, & of paine. Theſe thinges deere Sifters haue bin written by me, principally for thoſe that are newly entred into the ſpiritual combat of Religious life, or ſhall enter into it heerafter, to the end that being well inſtructed, they may diſtruſt always of themſelues, not confiding in their owne forces, wiſdome, or diſcretion. Let them remember with how many heauenly gifts God indued this his ſeruant, and yet after all this permitted that ſhe ſhould be ſharply aſſaulted, yea deceaued by our auncient

cient enemy, who as we haue said beguiled her vnder the forme of the Crucifix, and the B. Virgin, in punishment of her presuming that she could discouer all his deceits & temptations. God would teach her that still there is something to be feared, and that he alone can open mens eyes, to discouer and giue them strength to conquer infernall fiends.

This she tryed to be true, for by their fraud and deceit she was so battered & depressed, that not only she seemed to be no more friend & seruant of God, but also one wold haue iudged her to haue bin wholy forsaken of him, as hauing no memory left of so many heauenly gifts formerly bestowed vpon her. She quite forgot them,

them, & so poore she becam in spirit, that there was left no signe or token, that euer she had enioyed them, such was the vehemency of sorrow that filled her hart. But now hauing sayled ouer this tempestuous Sea, being come to the desired hauen of the land of promise, she singeth with the psalmist, *I haue byn humbled and he hath deliuered me*. For this tempest being blowne ouer, she attained to so great strength, and tranquillity of spirit, that in euery assault & combat she got the victory, not hauing any more sadnes or doubt of her saluation desiring alwaies this her Body might be dissolued to be with Iesus Christ. And such confidence had she, that this should come to passe, that whilst she yet

liued in her mortall Body, she thought her selfe as one of the Cittizens of heauen.

Neither did these diuine consolations cause arrogancy or any kind of presumption in her, yea she did esteeme her selfe the least and most vile of all the monastery, and vnworthy of the company of so many venerable mothers and Sisters. Oftentimes considering how by the diuine goodnes she had bin brought vp, & nourished in so excellent a monastery by the paines & trauels of others, she humbly, and from the bottom of her hart would cry vnto heauen saying, O incomprehensible clemency of the diuine maiesty, I am not worthy to dwell in thine house, no nor to giue thee thankes

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for so great benefit which I (though most vnworthy) haue receaued from thy bountifull hand, my eies dazeling in the multitude of thē. I dare not be so bold as to prayse thee O Sonne of iustice, who by the radiant beames of thy most beautiful face, dost gloriously giue light vnto heauen it selfe, and to al those that dwel therin; my most adominable and infected mouth, replenished with the loathsome sent of sinnes, cannot praise thee that art the most sweet and inestimable Balsamum from whence all celestiall fragrancy proceedes. In briefe, my basnes & fragility, so great as not to be compared to anyother, yea so great as nothing is comparable with it, cannot (O my most high and soueragne God,

O most true liuing man, that dost surpasse al coniecture and humaine intelligence) cannot I say, celebrate thy most sublime & superexcellent praises, though thy infinite charity doth not despise nor disdaine me, nor any other penitent sinner. Let all be attributed to thy puissant glory whatsoeuer I am, that dost not only permit the ground to beare me, but also that I liue in thy house, though I am but a little worme most abiect, most vncleane; let this be thy prayse, this be thy glory O soueraigne & infinit goodnes. Behold the thāks giuing which this seruant of God was in all things accustomed to giue to the diuine prouidence.

By which you see, that although she thought her selfe to be as Cit-

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tizen of heauen, yet durſt ſhe not attribute or appropriate any thing vnto herſelfe. For God had indued her with ſuch knowledge of her owne nothing, of her own weaknes, and of all other creatures, that ſhe could not glory in herſelfe, nor in any other thing, but only truſt in his diuine goodnes, and in the remembrance of the immaculate lambe, that paied ſo great a price for ſo vile a creature, to wit, his moſt bitter paſſion, in whoſe merits ſhe ſetled all her hopes, which ſhe doth now bequeath as an inheritance to her deere mothers & Siſters in Ieſus Chriſt, beſeeching them to ſtand alwaies in the field ſtrong and conſtant warriers, perſeuering vnto death in all things, ſeeking the glory of our moſt ſo-

ueraigne and high God, who threatneth them that study to please men more then himselfe, *That he will dissipate their bones*. Moreouer I beseech you, with all charitable affection, that you will alwaies seeke and procure the common good of this holy Conuent, bearing patiently all molestations which God shall permit to fall vpon you, puting your whole trust in him. I promise you that if I (as I hope I shall) find grace with him, I will pray for them that are at this present, & shall come heerafter, that you and they may euer obserue his holy commandments, serue him purely and faithfully in this sacred monastery of the diuine and Virginall Body of Iesus Christ, the sweet & pleasant food

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of holy soules. But contrariwise I promise (if it be lawfull for me to say it) that I wil pray him to punish according to their deserts, all that shall now, or heerafter, within or without this monastery, be so presumptuous as to violate impudently the honour of his name, or the renowne of his holy house in any sort whatsoeuer, or shall trouble the common peace, loue and vnion which vnto this preſēt day, by the diuin goodnes hath so continued, that since the last time of our inclosure, the least debate hath not hapned with might any way trouble the common tranquility of this holy Conuent.

Wherfore let euery one be diligent in her Office, perseuer constatly & patiently in good works,

procure with holy cõmiseration & motherly charity to nourish & sustaine the bodies and soules of those that are committed to her charge, fearing least the diuine wrath do light vpon her. Deerest Sisters I beseech you earnestly that you will take heed, that in no time the mortall pestilencē of ambition take possession of you, euen as hitherto it hath not bin able to fasten on you. I know for certaine this is the burning nettle which plucketh out of our harts the most sweet Olive of holy peace.

Alas, most deere Spouses of Iesus, beleeue me, and assure your selues, that ambition and want of of charity haue bin cause of all disorder, haue ruined many auncient Conuents of Religion. Let euery

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one desire to be the lowest, to be the least, bearing one with the other, supporting ech others infirmities both of body, and mind. You that shall gouerne in this place I beseech you, that you will be mindfull of that which S. Bernard exhorts vnto, to wit, not to impose vpon the shoulders of the subiect, heauier burthens then she is able to beare, that so *Good wil* which God doth principally demād of vs, may alwais surmoūt the work. Woe be to those superiors who by their negligence haue giuen place to the corruptiō of their bodyes that were subiect vnto them, whome the Omnipotent Father committed to their custody for the sauing of their Soules. But to ruturne to my selfe, with

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all humility and submission of spirit, prostrate on the ground, I demaund pardon more often then I am able to expresse, of my venerable and Reuerend mothers and sisters, both present and to come heerafter, of al the faults & temesityes which I haue committed, since my entrance into this monastery.

The peace and loue of our Sauiour Iesus, the immaculate lambe who vouchsafed for my sake to carry the most painfull and heauy Crosse, be alwais with you my beloued mothers and sisters, & you in him. Cease not to recommend me to him, he is of infinit pitty, he doth neuer leaue those that hope in him, though somtymes he permit them to be tossed with migh-

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ty ſtormes, to prooue them, and make them worthy of himſelfe: this being a true token and manifeſt ſigne of the moſt high and ſublime charity towardes them. He that ſtired vp in me an vnſatiable deſire of honor, knoweth that oftentimes with great abundance of teares, flowing from the bottome of my hart, with a deliberate will, I haue prayed and beſought him, that he would doe me that ſpirituall fauour, that if by my damnation there could come to his maieſty any increaſe of honour, he would prepare for me a place in the bottome of hell (if there may be ſaid to be any bottome) or ſome other place more profound and deep to torment me, where, euen as the moſt wicked

and guilty ſinner of the world, I may be placed and layed as the anuile of hell, and that for all the ſinnes which are, haue bin, or euer ſhall be, I may be there beaten and hammered with the cruelleſt ſtrokes of eternall puniſhment. And daily with al my hart & with a reſolute determination I doe offer vp my ſelfe to that torment, cõſidering firſt, that by this meanes the diuell the head of ſuch a multitude of members (as are the multitude of Sinners) ſhould haue far more ioy and content to torment them all, being ſo many, thẽ in me alone that am but one rotten and putrified member.

Secondly the number of thoſe that praiſe God in the Kingdome of heauen ſhould be greatly augmen-

mented if the multitude of Sinners were added to the Cõuent of the blessed. Thirdly thine honor O my God, should be far lesse impayred by the losse of one Soule, then by hearing the blasphemies of so great a multitude: although I doubt not, O most high & soueraigne glory, that thine honour cannot be in it selfe diminished by any thing whatsoeuer. But if I cãnot obtaine so much, that by my damnation thou receaue increase of praise, since no honour can be aded to so high and sublime maiesty, graunt vnto me at the least, that by my damnation, so great a number of Sinners may be saued.

And euen at this present considering this thing, I conceaue and feele in my soule a ioy far grea-

ter without all comparison, in the apprehension of the saluation of so many sinners, then of my selfe only. Wherfore without any staggering or wauering of thoughts, I offer myselfe into his diuin hands, and beseech him to inflict vpon me the torments which all sinners haue deserued, that the diuine iustice being in this sort satisfied, their saluation be not denied me, But woe be to me, for I feare that my torne and vncoherent request will be cast in my face, that haue so lewdly & caresly imployed the tallent that hath bin giuen me, whereof it would be to long for me now to discourse. Notwithstanding I will say this little, being constrained by vrgent and vehement griefe, that hath this long time

time possessed me; when I consider that vpon many of each sexe, that liue in places cõsecrated vnto the diuine honour, God by his grace hath bestowed diuers talents, which they vse vnprofitably, not augmenting them by charitie towards their neighbours, nor being ashamed to hide them in the ground of their hart: this consideration I say strikes into my soule a vehement sorrow: neither shall the authours of this losse hide thẽselues when the day shall come, that it shall be said to euery one, Giue an account of thy Bayliffshippe.

Those that rule, being for the most part deceaued by the shaddowes of their sensuall appetite, hinder the most noble workes of

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charity, imposing vpon their flock that which they can neither beare nor disgest. The cause is, the little account which they make in monasteries, of the obseruance of their Rules, and Institution. For in these times (a thing most lamentable) the craft of the wicked spirits is so increased, their superstitions haue so slipt in, certaine new kinds of ambushes are so augmented (which notwithstanding doth not excuse those that haue their vnderstanding illuminated with perfect charity, and consider these thinges) that now a daies in holy Conuents, that which our Sauiour left by testament vnto his Apostles hath no more place. His Institution was, that as often as his Apostles did meete togea-

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ther, they ſhould ſalute ech other with the ſweet word of peace, and that ſhould be token amongſt thē of true loue, to the end that by this meanes, the fire of holy charity ſhould augment & daily be more and more inflamed. And contrariwiſe we ſee that loue and charity doth daily, yea hourely faile, if it be not prudētly with a vigilāt ſpirit exerciſed, as fire if you doe not adde new fuell to it, ſoone giues ouer burning, & in the end is quite extinguiſhed.

This is ſeene by experience, that ſuch men cannot enioy peace with others, the diuell neuer ceaſing, til vnder the pretence of vertue, he extirpate the very ſtocke and roote of all vertues; ſo that the one would not ſee the other

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by their good will. He that hath eares to heare, let him vnderstand: to a good vnderstanding there needeth but few words. But those that by diuine dispensation are made phisitians of the maladies and infirmities of others, I beseech them by the soueraigne charity of God, that they ponder and examine the damnable and pestilent destruction which doth insue vpō the want of Charity and fraternall dilection. For therby the most noble and excellent vertue, and the most necessary in holy congregations (which is in such diuersity of natures & conditions to know how to beare the burthen of euery one) is so weakned and so reduced to nothing, that the least moate seemes an heauy & vnsupportable

portable Beame. And by the mischiefe proceeding from this vice it is easy to coniecture how behoofefull it is alwaies to blow the fire of true and holy Charity, that our enemy who cõtinually striues to extinguish this most necessary flame may be confounded, & cast downe into his bottomles depth.

And to the end my deerest Sisters that you may haue occasion alwaies to feare, and daily to prepare your selues for the last generall Iudgment, I will not conceale that which God shewed to the aforesaid Religious woman. It happened before that we were subiect to the statutes and precepts of the Order, which we call the Rule, in this monastery of Corpus Christi, during the time that Lucy our first

first mother, of the Family of the *Mascaroni*, did rule and gouerne, by whome according to the will of God I was admitted. And she was the first who with sincere Charity, and motherly affection, taught and instructed me to serue God; prostrate at whose Feete I doe acknowledge myselfe to be exceedingly obliged vnto her, recommending her perpetually vnto you my Mothers and Sisters, that you and I be not found vnmindfull of our dutyes, being so much bound vnto her, not only for the paines she endured many yeares in this place, but also for the beginning of this Monastery, which by her sweet and diligent administration was conserued for the whole time of her Superiority

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in holy peace, and good life, to the praise of Iesus Christ, before whō I hope in the end we shall all perpetually reioice with her.

But to returne to my promise of the Celestiall vision in the year of our Lord 1431. the aforesaid seruant of Iesus Christ, that sustained the aboue mentioned assaults was rapt in spirit to behold a wōderful vision of the last Iudgment whereof the Order and manner was this. She saw in the cloudes the omnipotent and high God in humane figure, his garments being of purple, his face turned towardes the west: by his side but something lower, stood the Virgin his Mother our Aduocate, attired in a white garment, the was silent, and her countenance pen-

liue and full of admiration. Somewhat further of, were the Apostles sitting in resplendent chaires like vnto bright fire: and lower yet was an innumerable multitude of both sexes, not sitting but standing. They were all with their faces looking vp towardes heauen, and in the mideſt of them was one that cried out with a loud voice. The seruant of Iesus Christ presens at this vision, stood at the right hand of God, amongst that great multitude, and with a loud voice and with great ioy, she cried out vnto God, and vttered words which I will now passe ouer in silēce.

After this vision being returned to her corporall sēses, considering attentiuely what she had seene, she thought with her selfe what

it might signify, and desiring greatly to know it, besought God earnestly to declare vnto her whether it were a diabolicall deceit, or a presage that the last and generall Iudgement should soone come. He that readeth this, let him vnderstand, that it was answered her that she should not thinke it an illusiō, but that she should hold for certain, that what she had seene, to wit, the day of the last vniuersall iudgement, should soone come to be accomplished. Wherfore my deere mothers and Sisters I pray you, & againe earnestly beseech you, that you will not cease to appease the Iustice of God by your praiers & corporal pēnances, that he may mercifully beare with the innumerable offences of mākind,

principally that abominable vice which is so contrary to the Virginall and chaste beauty of Iesus Christ, and of his glorious mother; the vice also of ambition, of pride, and of wicked Couetousnes, which raigneth now amongst all Estates.

These vices nourish continuall wars, these possesse the harts of Christian people, by their meanes true Charity is now so extinguished, that euen naturall loue finds place but in few persons, that amongst Fathers and Children, & amongst Brother and Brother scarsely can peace be mayntayned, certaine, manifest, and true signes that the last day of doome is at hand. I will make an end, (for my discourse would be ouer long

long if I shold speak all that might be said of this matter) turning my selfe to my owne thoughts, and considering how at the day of the generall Iudgement all the Sinnes and Offences of all men shall be discouered & made manifest vnto euery one; I will not therefore now hide and conceale my owne, knowing that by confession they are in part blotted out and remitted. Wherefore examining and discussing diligētly my selfe, I say in verity that for the deceitfull life wherwith I find my selfe defiled I ought not to expect any thing but destruction and confusion before God, & men.

The falshood which doth defile me is, that I haue not in such sort as I ought (nor as it behooued

the seruant of God) perfectly desired to be knowne, and be esteemed of euery one so vile and abominable, as I know and beliene my selfe to be, to wit, proud, arrogant, malepart, detractious, giuing liberty to my appetites, like a brute beast, depriued of the light of reason. Ignorance of ones selfe is the bane of all good, the principal cause and inuentour of all destruction, perturbation, and mischiefes that euer haue bin in the world, are at this present, or shall be heereafter. And in verity I confesse that I haue not yet in any sort knowne my own vilenes and nothing. For if I had knowne my selfe, I should not haue presumed to look vpon any place how vile soeuer, much lesse durst I

haue

haue lifted vp my eyes to heauen. Wherfore I see not any place, no not in the lowest & darckest corner of hel, conueniēt & befiting my infection and pestilent putrefaction; seeing euen in Hell the diuine Iustice is satisfied, by the torments of those that haue offended his soueraigne goodnes. But there being no good in me, it followeth consequently that out of my selfe there is no place so horrible and abominable, as is conuenient for me. I will remaine then within my selfe, being not able to find any roome more loathsome, darke, and infected.

Woe be to me, miserable wretch, what hath it auailed me to haue attained such knowledge of my selfe, sith I haue not with

my whole hart wished & sought that Iustice might haue place in all thinges, that is to say, that euery one should know me to be such, as I haue declared my selfe, and know my selfe verily to be. True it is, that I haue not desired thinges contrary to mine owne vnworthines, as honour, Prelacy, and renowne of Sanctity, but hauing bin negligent in the desire of suffering, disgrace, and contempt, it followeth that I haue not faithfully imployed the inestimable tallent of good will, assigned vnto me by the soueraigne goodnes of my Lord. For being enriched frō him with this most excellēt gift, & being called to his diuin seruice, I ought carefully to haue bestowed all my care, force, and diligence,

to be conformable vnto him, by submitting my selfe to all torments, walking by the way of the Crosse, reiecting all ioy and all that might delight my spirit, louing those that hate me, meekely honouring those that contemne mee, seruing with all my hart those that deny me their seruice, speaking well of those that haue spoken ill of me, knowing that I rather deserue that one should spit in my face thē shew me any signe of courtesy or respect. For I ought most to loue and honour my sister, who doth heerin most help me, sith by the meanes of contempt, more then by any other, I come to be like vnto my Lord Iesus Christ.

Beholding the great coldnes & tepidity which I haue vsed in this

thing, I may truly affirme, that I doe falsely vsurpe the name of seruãt of Iesus, seing I haue not loued that which he came to imbrace, & imbraced with most vehement affection, to wit, the Crosse, full of sweetnes and loue. Wo be to me miserable wretch, how great hath bin my errour, and blindnes, sith I haue so long delaied to consider and looke into these thinges. For although in the beginning of my conuersion iniuries did in some sort delight me: yet afterwardes this feruour growing could a great tepidity for many yeares possessed me, that I haue not desired nor sought withall my hart to be iniured, reproached, mocked, reuiled, and in fine to be subiect to euery creature, how vile soeuer,

that

that so at the least they might somwhat reuenge the iniuries I haue done vnto their Creatour, who for me, and of me hath receaued innumerable.

Woe be to thee, O my soule that hast lost so noble and excellent Iewels, such ornaments as were so profitable for thee. Answere me, with what forhead, face, or countenance, darest thou approach and come before the most beautifull face which is the splendour of his Fathers glory, that is before the only begotten Sonne of the most high God, him I say who (as thou knowest, inflamed with thy loue, and as it were inebriated therwith, veyling and hiding the beames of his diuinity, yet not separated from it) became man, mortall,

mortall, and passible; him that descending from his Imperiall throne, leauing the company of so many heauenly Princes, became a stranger and pilgrime in this world, poore, needy, trauayled there in through sharp and rough wayes; suffered hunger, thirst, cold, as the Ghospell doth witnesse. We reade that the Priestes sayd, *This man we know not from whence he is*; By which wordes euery one may coniecture the greatnesse, and immensity of his most perfect and soueraygne loue towardes vs, with whome to conioyne himselfe he would from so high sublimity descend to so admirable a profoundity & lownes, vndertaking a most painfull and laborious peregrination, as Ieremy

my hath propheſied, ſaying: He liued amongſt nations and found not any reſt Vpon which lamentable wordes, and worthy of commiſeration, I might find many thinges to ſay which I let paſſe, knowing how contrary they wold be to many thinges which are found in thoſe, who name themſelues to be followers of Chriſt Ieſus.

But becauſe this doth not appertaine vnto me, nor is fitting for me, I will be ſilent, and returne to the former diſcourſe of my own nakedneſſe. When I behould then, and conſider that I haue not anſwered to the immēſe loue of the moſt meeke Lambe Chriſt Ieſus, vvho for my ſake would haue his moſt beautifull,

Virgi-

Virginall, and glorious Face defiled, obscured, and deformed, and that I haue not exercised my selfe in his reproaches, I see consequently that I haue wanted the principall vertue, and the most necessary for me. Wherefore my deere Mothers and Sisters, I beseech you to pray for my sinnes, that God would vouchsafe to forgiue me, and accomplish that which he promised when he sayd; if the adultéresse returne agayne vnto me, and I will not reiect her.

And agayne my deere Sisters, and Mothers, from whome I cannot depart, I beseech you, that you be carefull not to be found degenerous spouses or aduoutresses, as my selfe am found, but

but rather true and faythfull Espouses of Christ Iesus; watch ouer your selues, that when the eternal and celestiall Emperour shall send for yōu, to call you to himselfe, you may sweetly and ioyfully celebrate that wedding, and be admitted to the Bed of his triumphant Glory, perpetually conioyned to his most chast and diuine loue. Labour with all diligence that when he sendes and calles, he may not find you vnprepared of moqueables; Ornaments, and Iewells, necessary for so Chaste and Virginall a Bridegrome. Of which Ornaments and Iewells, although I haue often spoken vnto you, yet taking great delight in them, I would willingly repeate them, the better

better to imprint them in your memory. I haue sayd vnto you my deere Sisters, and certainly it is so, that the dowry which Iesus christ demands & expects of you, is, that you should be generous, constant, and strong warriers, in all assaults and encounters, that by the patience which you haue exercised, you may to this dowry add the foresayd Iewells, to wit infatigable desire to suffer for Iesus your Lord: also diligent application of your whole study to endure diuers perturbations, wants, afflictions, infamies, reproaches, derisions; and to be briefe to vndergoe death it selfe, if the occasion be offered for his most sweet loue.

Hauing these thinges and the like

like, doubt not but you carry with you, the wedding Garments, that is to say, the markes and signes of Iesus Christ, who to his most tenderly beloued Spouse burning with the loue of the Crosse sayth, As I haue suffered for thee my Spouse, so would I haue thee suffer for me. And againe, Whosoeuer will come vnto me (who am the foundation of life) must walke the straite and narrow way. You must therefore (my deere Sisters) keep deepely printed in your remembrance, this most wholesome aduise to prepare your Nuptiall Ornaments, and so attend the most excellent & magnificent embassadge which your Spouse will send you.

O how happy shall you then

be; how sweet shall the fruit be which you shall then gather from your former painfull and bitter labours; how ioyfull shall you be to haue suffered, with true patiéce, persetiering in the place to which God hath called you. Which doing, that shall not happen to you, which now happeneth vnto me, to fall into confusion, and falsely to vsurpe the name of the seruant of Iesus Christ. I say falsely, for that as I haue declared heere aboue, it was not so great a pleasure as it ought to haue beene, vnvnto me, to carry my Crosse for Iesus his loue; so that I may say in verity that I expect no other but destruction and confusion, both before God, and before men. Notwithstanding though I haue

not

not payed that which I ought, yet will I be mindfull of that which the Prophet sayth, *Yea though I be dead, yet will I hope in this mercy O Lord*. I will not forsake the most excellent vertue called Hope in God. For he doth promise out of his goodnesse, that if on earth I find not where to rest my head, certainely I shall goe to rest in heauen, where I shall find full accomplishment of ioyes, if heere I haue had alwaies some trouble and crosses. There I shall receaue great honour, if for Iesus Christ I be heere neglected and afflicted. In the Celestiall Kingdome all my desires shall be fulfilled, if in this life I want my desire. In the presence of God I shall sing most sweetly, if in this present Quire I

be content humbly to intone the pſalmes. He will make me immortall and impaſſible, if for his loue in this life I feare neyther paine nor death. In his Kingdom I ſhall be an Empreſſe, if I be heere poore, and a needy beggar. In fine, without doubt I ſhall perpetually reioyce in his goodnes, if I perſeuer in his moſt chaſt and Virginall loue. Amen.

My deere mothers and Siſters the peace and loue of Chriſt Ieſus dwell in your hartes, and in the harts of all Chriſtian people, to whome be happines and proſperity, and praiſe to the true God, one, and moſt perfect in Trinity, and to the Word Incarnate. Amen.

Heere

Heere speake the sacred Virgins of the Monastery of Bologna.

THAT which followeth is the Coppy of an Epistle which the Blessed Mother, with her owne hand, by the will of God, and diuine Reuelation, after she was come to Bologna, wrote, as our venerable Father *Fr. Baptist de Modena*, who was then her Confessarius, hath since foūd noted in her Booke the yeare of our Lord 1463. which Epistle we Sisters of the Monastery of Corpus Christi, in Bologna, haue in our keeping, and it is this which followeth.

If the name of Iesus Christ, I

admoniſh him whoſoeuer he be, to whoſe handes this Booke ſhall come, that he giue it vnto the venerable Father, vnto whome I doe vſe to confeſſe my ſinnes, to the end he may write it ouer againe; and if peraduenture he cannot doe it himſelfe, that he cauſe it to be written by ſome other; and that he correct that which he findeth therein to be amiſſe, or to neede explication: which done let him giue a copy thereof to the Conuent of my beloued Mothers and Siſters of Corpus Chriſti, founded at Ferrara, ſo that the firſt originall of this Booke remayne in the Monaſtery, where I ſhall haue finiſhed and concluded my pilgrimage. I admoniſh the aforeſayd Father to put this in execution

the ſooneſt that he can poſſibly: which I doe enioyne him, by the cõmandmẽt of our Lord, who of his clemency obliged me to doe ſo, and to write this for the inſtruction, direction, and ſecurity of poore Siſters, dedicated vnto God who willingly haue choſen Cloiſters, and the priſons of Monaſteries. Which Siſters both preſent and to come, with my whole hart and earneſt affection I recõmend vnto you my Reuerend Father, and to al thoſe that ſhall heerafter be their ghoſtly Fathets and Guides, and that in the charity of Chriſt Ieſus, for whoſe loue I requeſt it, you wil to the help of my ſoule, giue me an almes celebrating once for me the holy Sacrifice of the Maſſe. I alſo recom-

mend myselfe to the other Fathers and Brothers in our Lord, in whose peace, and loue do you perseuer alwayes. Amen.

Another

Another Protestation of S. Catharine of Bologna, that this Booke was composed by her selfe.

I Catharine, a poore Bolognian, that is to say begotten, borne, and brought vp at *Bologna*, & espoused vnto Christ Iesus at *Ferrara*, heere aboue giuing my selfe the surname of Dogge, haue by diuine instinct & inspiration, written this little Booke with my owne hand, in the Monastery of Corpus Christi, at Ferrara, in the Chāber couered with bowes & bulrushes, in which I lined, at that time the Superiour of the monastery being our Reuerend Mother, Sister

Thaddea, sister in the world to Marcus Pius of an Illustrious & noble family, in the yeare of our Lord 1438. I would not that in my lifetyme this Booke come to the knowledge of any: the which be sayd to the prayse of Iesus Christ, and not vnto my owne. Amen.

The

The Ant-hymne of Saint Catharine of Bologna.

O Virgo Prudentiſſima,
Dū cuolaſti ſidera,
Reliquiſti in Bononia,
Lampadem balſamiti-

miticam,

Ægris dante remedium.

O Catharina,

Franciſci noua Plãtula,

Ora Deum, cui es iuncta,

Vt æternam poſſideamus vitam.

Verſus Ora pro nobis

Beata Catharina.

Reſp.

Resp. Vt digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

Oremus.

DEvs qui liquorem aromaticũ, de mẽbris Beatæ Catharinæ Virginis, ad honorem tui nominis manare voluisti: concede propitius, vt sicut

cut odore vnguentorum eius in terris reficimur; sic eius apud te in cælis suffragia sentiamus. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

FINIS.